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The Church of Scotland

INTERIM REPORT

OF THE

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON BAPTISM

MAY 1957

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REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION.

In 1955 the Commission in its first major Interim Report presented to the General Assembly a study of the doctrine of Baptism in the New Testament. This was sent down to Presbyteries for study and discussion. A great mass of comment and criticism has been received by the Commission, which has been much encouraged by this evidence of deep and widespread interest in its work. A small group of New Testament scholars is at present revising the statement of New Testament doctrine in the light of all the comments received, so that it may ultimately be published in a rather shorter and clearer form.

Last year the Commission presented to the General Assembly the first instalment of its study of the history of baptismal belief and practice. This covered the period up to St Augustine. From comments received, the Commission has been glad to note that many have appreciated the efforts of the Commission to make that Report easier to read than the first one was; and has been encouraged by evidence that it has also helped to answer questions which were prompted by the earlier one.

The Commission had hoped that it might have been possible to complete its study of the history of Baptism this year, but the very early date at which copy had to be in the hands of the printers has made this quite impossible. The doctrine and practice of Baptism in Scotland from the Reformation up to the present day will therefore be the subject of the Report next year. This will be followed by an attempt to draw up a statement of the doctrine of Baptism for the consideration of the General Assembly.

It may be well to repeat here what was said in last year's Report :—

> "Once the Assembly has issued a statement of the doctrine of Baptism, the Commission hopes to encourage the publication of a short, simply expressed explanation of the meaning of Baptism and of the duties it imposes. This would include answers to the main questions and difficulties about Baptism in a form suitable for use in the instruction of parents and young people.
>
> The Commission hopes also to encourage the publication of a volume in which the doctrinal statement would be supported by Biblical, dogmatic, and historical evidence."

The present Report covers the period of the Middle Ages and the Reformation. The teaching of the Scottish Reformers will be dealt with next year. It is the hope of the Commission that the Church will find in this Report an accurate and convenient summary of the essence of the Roman and Reformed positions, an understanding of which is vitally important for all the life and work of the Church to-day.

II. BAPTISM IN THE MEDIÆVAL CHURCH.

Mediæval religion was full of allegorical ideas and symbolism, which made a permanent mark not only on the rites and ceremonies of the Church, but also on its buildings and institutions, its literature and art, and not

least on its theology. The men of the Middle Ages believed that, in creating the earthly and material, God gave it a symbolic character, corresponding to the heavenly and spiritual. Thus, by a sacramental principle, outward and visible things were signs leading to a world of invisible, mystical realities.

This sacred symbolism implanted by God in the material creation was held to shadow forth the special sacramental means of grace which have their source in the Incarnation. After the fall of man, certain visible signs in the natural order were used to point forward to the coming Saviour. With the Incarnation, God appointed special sacramental symbols as perfected and potent instruments through which divine grace may be poured into the creature to heal and restore him to communion with God. In other words, God has created the Church as a sacramental organism through which the grace poured out in the Incarnation continues to operate for the salvation of the world. The sacraments are not less real because they are symbolic, for reality is essentially symbolic. It is precisely in and through their symbolic character that grace operates, drawing men back into the spiritual sphere, and raising them at last to participate in the life of God.

This Augustinian doctrine of the Church and sacraments dominated the whole life and thought of the Western Church throughout the Dark Ages. In the Middle Ages proper it began to acquire certain new and definitive characteristics, which have been retained by the Roman Church ever since.

A form of Augustinianism persisted as an essential ingredient in the Churches of the Reformation, and in their conceptions of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

If we are to understand the mediæval development and the Reformation doctrine of Baptism, it is important that we should examine and assess the basic Augustinian tradition as it was absorbed and interpreted by the Western Church.

1. THE AUGUSTINIAN TRADITION.

The traditional Augustinian teaching about the sacraments can conveniently be expounded under three heads.

(*a*) Word and Sacrament.

To Augustine himself the Western Church, and especially the Churches of the Reformation, owe their understanding of the essential togetherness of Word and sacrament. Only when the Word is added to the element does the latter become a sacrament. Great weight was therefore laid upon the " evangelical words " which accompany and constitute the sacramental ordinances. The Word was regarded as *audible sign*, the sacrament as *visible sign*. Thus the Word was itself essentially sacramental, while the sacrament was essentially *visible word*.

The symbolic or signitive character of both Word and sacrament means that they are outward and temporal signs of an inward and enduring grace. Though the inward grace is the important thing, the outward signs are indispensable, for they are fixed ordinances inseparably embedded in an ecclesiastical institution. Thus the Word and sacraments are not self-sufficient means of grace. They are effective only in virtue of their relation to the Church, the sacramental institution, of which they are instruments

They are therefore held to derive their efficacy from the Church, and not, as the Reformers tended to insist, *vice versa*.

(*b*) Sign and Thing Signified.

To Augustine also the Western Church owes its characteristic understanding of the sacraments as outward and visible signs pointing to inward and invisible grace.

This emphasis upon the symbolic character of the sacraments tended to stress the *meaning* of the sacramental action rather than the consecrated *elements*. Ample room was thus made for understanding and faith.

In the Augustinian tradition, however, the contrast between the outward symbolic character of the sacraments and the inward mystical character of grace led to unfortunate results. It is true that the sacraments were regarded as gifts of Christ to His Church. In the last resort Augustine always emphasised that it is Christ Himself who acts. "*Hic est qui baptizat.*" In spite of this, however, in the mediæval Church Christ tended to disappear behind the outward symbols ; and the Biblical and Early Christian stress upon the historical Christ, and on personal relation to Christ, tended to be displaced by ritual acts. The Church now stepped visibly into the foreground as the effective agent dispensing the sacraments. Mystical experiences of Christ might come to the few, but to the majority the sacraments were means whereby Christ's saving institution, the Church, functioned in the world. They were not so much sacraments of the Gospel as sacraments of the Church.

(*c*) Effect and Use of the Sacraments.

Augustine himself was less concerned with the operation of the sacraments than with what they are, and how they are to be used. God alone, in the freedom of His Spirit, actually forgives and regenerates men ; but He has appointed Baptism to be used by the Church as an indispensable ordinance through which He will give these graces. Whether Baptism will be effective for a man's salvation depends also upon the use he makes of it. He can make saving use of Baptism only within the Church, to which the sacrament is essentially subordinated.

As the Augustinian tradition developed throughout the Middle Ages, Baptism came to occupy a fundamental place as the sacrament whereby men were united with the Church, outside of which there was no salvation. After Augustine's victory over the Donatists it was recognized that Baptism could be valid outwith the Church, but it was not regarded as effective for salvation except within the one holy Catholic Church. To be baptized and yet remain separated from the Church was to suffer a mortal wound. Catholic Baptism was Baptism into the Catholic Church ; it was to be inserted into the one and only sphere of salvation, and was therefore the *sine qua non* of the means of grace.

2. INFANT BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION.

(*a*) Infant Baptism.

Following Augustine and the early Fathers, the mediæval Church taught that God is Father, Christ, the Word of God, is the *semen paternum*, and

the Church is the mother, who conceives children in her womb, and brings them forth through the waters of Baptism. Through this birth they belong to the "faithful." They are born again through the Holy Spirit, who now dwells in them and bestows upon them divine grace. The personal response of faith is absolutely necessary. It grows with the child as he is nurtured within the bosom of the Church.

The Augustinian tradition therefore, in its understanding of infant Baptism, lays the emphasis upon the promise of the Spirit to the child, which makes faith possible for him, and upon the responsibility of the Church, as mother, to nurture and instruct the child, thus fostering the growth of his faith.

Through Baptism the child becomes the property of Christ. If the child dies before he can believe, he is saved; if he lives, his salvation depends on whether he makes proper use of his Baptism within the Church.

(*b*) Confirmation.

From early times confirmation had been an integral part of the baptismal rite. It consisted of anointing with oil and the imposition of hands, or the lifting up of hands, over the baptized. Later on it came to be used as a means of accepting into the Catholic Church those who had been "validly" baptized by schismatics, or of "perfecting" the Baptism of those who had been baptized by laymen in cases of necessity.

The general tendency was to reserve such "confirmation" for the bishop. Hence it became a distinct rite within the one complex sacrament of Baptism.

In the East confirmation was always given along with Baptism, whether the candidates were infants or adults. In the West it was at first given as soon as possible after Baptism. According to Alexander of Hales, confirmation was instituted as a sacrament in 845 A.D. at the Council of Meaux. By then it had come to be delayed until the age of twelve or fourteen or more. It conferred "habitual grace" to strengthen the baptized for the profession of faith, and for a life of bearing the Cross of Christ. Like Baptism it was reckoned to bestow an "indelible character," and could not be repeated.

(*c*) Depreciating of Baptism.

There can be little doubt that the introduction of confirmation as a separate sacrament, like the earlier introduction of penance, had the effect of depreciating Baptism itself.

There was great laxity in the instruction of children. Masses of people came to look upon the symbolic ceremonies of the Church as automatically bringing with them the graces they represented. This led to protests, notably by Peter de Bruys and others, from the first half of the twelfth century onwards. It is highly significant that this first challenge to infant Baptism to arise within the Catholic Church sprang out of the deep-seated dualism in the Augustinian tradition, in a movement that allied itself to dualistic heresies (*e.g.*, that of the Cathari) which originated in the East. Contemporary with this outbreak of anti-pædobaptism in the West is the oldest actual documentary evidence (1140 A.D.) of the denial of infant Baptism in the East (by the Paulician sect of Armenia mentioned in the Report of 1956).

3. THE MEDIÆVAL SYNTHESIS.

Arising out of the Augustinian tradition two distinct lines of sacramental teaching emerged—the one juridical, the other mystical. These were combined by Peter Lombard, whose *Sentences* (twelfth century) laid down the fundamental lines for the theology of the great Schoolmen, and indeed for the official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.

(*a*) The Legalistic Conception of Baptism.

The Augustinian stress upon the correct formula, and upon the necessity for Baptism to be within the True Church, opened a way toward a more forensic conception of it by the early mediæval canonists. This whole development was given powerful expression in the *Decree of Gratian* (published about 1144 A.D.), which elaborated the ecclesiastical law of Baptism in 156 canons (Pars III, Dist. IV). Most of the citations supporting these canons are taken from Augustine himself. There is no doctrine here of *ex opere operato* efficacy. Baptism does not operate physically, but spiritually. Through it Christ grants forgiveness of sins, and this is made effective through faith. Nevertheless correct legal and ritual enactment is so stressed that Baptism tends to be regarded as a mere door into the spiritual and sacramental life of the Church. The importance of the historical consecration of Baptism by the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan gives place to the stress upon the liturgical consecration of the font by a bishop. Hence the interest in the sacrament is directed away from Christ and His Word to the details of the correct sacramental action, which were soon to be called the " form and matter " of the sacrament. The " *right to Baptism* " came to be regarded as more important than the *use made* of it.

The publication of the *Decree of Gratian* must be regarded as one of the most significant stages in the history of the doctrine of Baptism in the West. It is a warning to all who are more concerned with the practical and legal definitions of baptismal administration than with the evangelical doctrine and the spiritual content of Baptism.

(*b*) Modified Augustinianism.

Contemporary with this legalistic emphasis upon the correct administration of the sacrament, there was a powerful revival of Augustinian doctrine as modified by the evangelical teaching of Bernard of Clairvaux (cf. his *Tractatus de Baptismo*). The great theological figure in this was Hugo of St Victor, whose work on the sacraments (*De Sacramentis Christianæ Fidei*) became one of the most influential works in mediæval theology.

Hugo's general outlook can be described quite briefly. The sacraments and the Christian faith belong so closely together that the whole of Christian life has its centre in participation in the sacraments. On the other hand, the proper use of the sacraments is found only in the Christian life.

Hugo's definition of the sacraments became famous : " A sacrament is a corporal or material element, outwardly presented to the senses, which by its likeness represents, by its institution signifies, and by its consecration contains, some invisible and spiritual grace " (I.9.2).

Augustine himself would never have agreed that the sacraments *contain* invisible grace. For him the power and grace of Christ accompany the sacraments according to Christ's command and promise. Through using spatial categories, Hugo tends to interpret sacramental grace as though

it were a substance. Thus he can refer to a sacrament as a " vessel of spiritual grace " (II.9.4). Yet he also insists that " the faithful do not seek their salvation out of the elements even if they seek it in them, but they seek it out of Him and from Him by whom they are commanded to seek, and believe that He is to be experienced in them " (I.9.3). We are to look beyond the elements and beyond the officiating priest to God Himself. Though the sacraments are called " vessels," Hugo insists that no vessel ever healed the sick, that was the work of the medicine ; yet we are not to look even to the medicine, but to the physician Himself, whose skill has prepared a remedy for our healing (I.9.4).

This is the characteristic way in which the sacraments were regarded in the Middle Ages—viz., as the means of grace through which God provides divine medicine for the healing of wounded and sick humanity. But they are given to the Church, and are efficacious only because the Holy Spirit resides in the Church.

Although Hugo, like his contemporaries, thought of Baptism as the first in a definite series of sacraments, he held that it had once and for all been given its consecration in Christ's own Baptism. Thus he left room for a fullness of evangelical doctrine and spiritual content which was sadly lacking in the conception of Baptism held by the canon lawyers. This element persisted throughout the Middle Ages in spite of the dominance of legalistic and scholastic ideas, and eventually influenced the Reformers.

(*c*) The Synthesis of Peter Lombard.

It was Peter Lombard, a protégé of Bernard of Clairvaux and a pupil of Hugo of St Victor, who gave a clear and formal account of the teaching of the Church in his four books of *Sentences* (mid-twelfth century). In this work he gathered up the teaching of the early Fathers of East and West, of Augustine above all, and gave it systematic interpretation and form under the influence of the theology of Hugo, the method of Abelard (rather than of Anselm) and the temper of Gratian. The result was the greatest text-book of mediæval doctrine.

The method he followed lent itself to great clarity and precision, but it pressed the living faith of the Church into the rigid mould of logical distinctions and categories. The sacraments are the means of healing which God has provided for poor wounded humanity, and are dispensed by the Church like medicine. In this system faith has no special place, and the idea that the Word, as the creative and saving Word of Christ, is itself a means of grace has quite disappeared. The Word now becomes simply one ingredient in the ceremonial rite—a mere sacramental formula. The number of the sacraments is now reckoned as seven. They are the only means of grace, and form together the exclusive sacramental system which mediates salvation.

The great riches of patristic thought gathered up in the *Sentences* still make it a valuable text-book, but Lombard's theology fell a prey to the legalism of the the mediæval Schoolmen who were chiefly concerned not with Biblical teaching and theological renewal but rather with systematizing the average views prevailing in the Church.

The doctrinal changes are fairly clear. Emphasis is still laid upon the baptismal formula in the name of the Holy Trinity, which is said to be of the very substance of Baptism, but interest is not directed to the Word of Christ, or to the proclamation of the Gospel, but to the prescribed words of institution. Sight is thus lost of the whole setting of Baptism in the Gospel. Interest in Christ's Baptism in the Jordan is limited to the fact that the baptismal waters were there purged and sanctified by

"the touch of the Lord's body"—a saying of Chrysostom frequently adduced by Gratian and Peter Lombard. Baptism is above all a sacramental ritual. Attention is focused upon the water, and pains are therefore taken to explain that it is used because water is the universal medium for cleansing and the easiest to obtain.

Peter Lombard did not regard salvation as residing in the sacrament itself, but rather in the death of Christ the Saviour. It is doubtful whether he can be charged with the *ex opere operato* doctrine of Baptism which was characteristic of the Schoolmen.

As in the Augustinian tradition, Peter Lombard, like Bernard and Hugo, leaves room for the response of faith, and admits that the real power of Baptism does not reach us only through water-Baptism. This is clear from the validity of martyr-Baptism in blood. Moreover, Baptism received and used in penitence, brings remission of sin—both of original sin and of actual sin committed before Baptism. Children are baptized in the full faith of the baptizing Church which receives them. But the salvation granted in Baptism is not made good to those who, when they grow up, do not continue in the faith. The stress upon the judicial aspect of the institution of Baptism, however, makes the correct administration of the sacrament, in the last resort, of more importance than faith. "The faith of the Church does not suffice for little children without the sacrament."

Lombard's view is guarded by another element inherited from Augustine—viz., the relation of Baptism to election as the ultimate ground of salvation, and the fact that Baptism and election do not always coincide. He who is to be saved already belongs to the Ark of salvation by the judgment of God, but now, through Baptism, he belongs to it also through the judgment of the Church. A man may be baptized, and by the judgment of the Church belong to the Ark of salvation without belonging to it by the judgment of God, for he may actually be lost through mortal sin in spite of Baptism.

All this has to be viewed in the light of Lombard's concept of the Church as indwelt by the Holy Spirit and by the fullness of saving grace. It is on the ground of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit or the sevenfold fullness of grace that the Church's sacraments are essentially and only seven in number. These seven sacraments are graded as the means whereby saving and enabling grace is dispensed, as it were in increasing doses, to the faithful, for their spiritual pilgrimage. Baptism is the sacramental door into that process, and is to be understood Christocentrically—not, however, as the sign and seal of our being grafted into Christ once and for all, or of justification in Him, but as the beginning of a graduated participation in degrees of grace, open to those who co-operate with it in faith and love, in obedience to the Church, and in good works.

4. THOMAS AQUINAS AND THE SCHOOLMEN.

After centuries in which there were few outstanding theologians, the Schoolmen attempted to articulate the mind of the Church by producing a doctrinal consensus. Theological conceptions which had arisen from popular piety were rationalized, and the whole history of Christian doctrine was reinterpreted in terms of Aristotelian dialectic. This helps to explain why ideas rediscovered from the Scriptures and from the early Fathers often lie, in the teaching of the Schoolmen, side by side with quite unbiblical ideas arising from the unchecked growth of popular piety during the Dark Ages. There were also, however, changes in the right direction, but these were frequently distorted by false perspectives.

One outstanding example of the differences between mediæval theology in the West and the earlier teaching of men like Augustine or Gregory the Great, is the increased emphasis upon the passion of Christ as the fount and source of salvation and of the whole sacramental life of the Church. Anselm made a great contribution to this through his devotional writings. There can, however, be no doubt that the doctrine of transubstantiation, which had grown rapidly since 840 A.D., concentrated attention upon the broken Body and shed Blood of Christ upon the altar. By the time of the Middle Ages proper we find that the sacraments, and especially "the two most powerful sacraments" as Aquinas called them, were regarded essentially as the means whereby the passion of Christ, which had won for mankind God's saving grace, was applied to men for their salvation in soul and body. Side by side with this lies another conception of the sacraments: that they are the means whereby the Incarnation is extended in the life of the Church, the mystical Body of Christ. In Christ Himself deity and humanity were united. Through sacramental participation in His humanity, therefore, the Church participates in the life of God. The seven sacraments represent the sevenfold fullness of that grace residing now in the Church, but Baptism and the Eucharist were regarded as having a special place among the seven, as having flowed directly from the wounded side of Christ, and as having been directly instituted by Him.

Three further characteristics of the scholastic doctrine of the sacraments must be noted:—

(*a*) Transubstantiation.

Sign and thing signified, form and content, are now regarded as fused together. In the idea of transubstantiation the symbols of bread and wine are regarded as actually converted in their substance into the Body and Blood of the Lord, so that all that remains to the outward eye is the mere "accidental" appearance of bread and wine.

This idea was much harder to apply to Baptism, but great stress was laid upon the consecration of the water that it might actually convey the sanctifying Spirit to the baptized. Aquinas used Hugo's idea that "the sacraments contain invisible grace" to justify this doctrine (*Summ. Theol.* III.62.3.3). Thomas went so far as to oppose the Augustinians and Franciscans for denying that a divine power inheres in the sacramental signs.

(*b*) The Sacraments as Causes of Grace.

From being outward signs of invisible grace the sacraments came to be regarded as "causing grace." Two factors led to this: (1) The first was the endeavour to mark the real distinction between the sacraments of the Old Testament and those of the New Testament. The Old Testament sacraments belonged to the time when relationship to the coming passion of Christ, and justification, were possible only in faith. In New Testament times the outer event has taken place. God's grace was incarnate in our human flesh and blood, and could be seen with the eyes and handled with the hands. The New Testament sacraments take their nature from this. Now we are not only related to Christ in faith: we actually participate in Him in the sacraments of the Church. If the Old Testament sacraments operated *per fidem*, the New Testament sacraments must be said to operate *per se* (III.62.5). (2) The second factor was the endeavour to explain how the sacraments can operate *per se*. Aquinas accepted Hugo's statement that the sacraments contain grace. This, says Aquinas, they transmit

to men. God is the principal cause of this grace : the sacraments are the instrumental causes which He uses. This statement is true so long as it is borne in mind that the instrumental cause is effective only through the power of the principal cause, but it becomes dangerous the moment one asserts, as Thomas did, that even as instrumental causes the sacraments are indwelt by a real power.

The theologians of the Franciscan tradition were often ready to accept the idea that the sacraments caused grace, but only, as Duns Scotus put it, "in a certain sense." Thus a sacrament is an instrumental cause in the sense that it signifies what the accompanying grace fulfils in men. In the later mediæval period this conception was widespread—cf., for example, the teaching of Biel and Durand. Thus it was taught that Baptism not only signifies cleansing from sin, but that it effects it, for God Himself acts in His own sign, and uses it to assist Him in producing the effect it signifies.

The difference between the Thomists and the Franciscans was really very deep rooted, and cannot be fully discussed here, but two points must be mentioned : (1) The teaching of Aquinas was bound up with his whole conception of creation, and of God as absolute causality, while the teaching of the Franciscans was bound up with their great concern for personal relationship to Christ. (2) Over against the inveterate Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism of the mediæval world, Aquinas sought to preserve the evangelical insistence upon grace alone, though the manner in which he attempted to do this misled him into a very strict determinism. The real root of the error lay in the Roman conception of grace as a power and quality detachable from God—as something created that could be infused into human beings. To attempt to expound the operation of this divine-creaturely grace in terms of cause and effect is bound to lead to mechanical determinism, no matter how subtle the scholastic distinctions employed may be. It was the Thomist conception of the sacraments as containing and causing grace that was officially adopted as Roman doctrine.

(c) *Ex Opere Operato.*

This difficult conception means that the sacraments are efficacious not on the ground of the faith of the minister or recipient or both of them together, but on the ground of the sacrament itself, or its proper enactment. At best this means that the sacramental sign is efficacious in that it really effects the grace that it signifies. Grace is given on the ground of Christ's sacramental institution and promise in the sacrament. This does not mean, however, that faith, personal "disposition," or response are ruled out. On the contrary they are required for the proper reception of sacramental grace. Nevertheless, according to the scholastic theology, the efficacy and validity of the sacraments do not depend upon man's subjective dispositions or feelings. All that is required is that a man should receive the sacrament and not offer any obstacle to it. The doctrine of *ex opere operato* efficacy is adopted, therefore, it is said, in order to lay the emphasis upon grace, and to avoid the idea that man can in any sense merit grace, even if only through faith. Furthermore, if the efficacy of the sacraments depended upon a right motive or inner devotion in the receiver, who could ever worthily or efficaciously receive them ? The sacraments are for sinners, and are bestowed in order to give healing and grace. The sacraments themselves enable sinners to receive them worthily.

Stated in this way it is not surprising that many Protestant Churches have accepted the *ex opere operato* conception of the sacraments. But

the whole conception is basically wrong. It focuses the attention upon the *opus operatum*—*i.e.*, upon the outward administration of the rite, whereas the focus should be upon the Act of God in Christ. We must never forget the essentially symbolic character of the sacraments. By their very nature they point away from themselves, away from the rite and ceremony, to what God has once and for all accomplished on our behalf in Jesus Christ, and to what He continues to give us through the Holy Spirit on the ground of the finished work of Christ. Moreover, when the *ex opere operato* notion is allied to the Thomist conception of the sacraments as causing grace, it can be interpreted only in a materialistic and mechanical sense. To think of the sacraments in terms of cause and effect is to eliminate from them the whole dimension of mystery and eschatology which is so strong in the teaching of the New Testament and of the Early Church, and to identify the creativity of the Holy Spirit with a quasi-physical grace infused into human nature through physical instruments.

It is precisely in this Thomist conception of grace (*Summ. Theol. II.I.* 109-114) that the radical difference between Roman Catholic and Reformed doctrine lies. According to Roman theology there is a "created grace" which underlies all created being and relates it to the divine being. Grace bestowed upon the fallen creation does not therefore destroy it, but brings it to its completion. In the sacraments, however, two kinds of grace are given: (1) a justifying or sanctifying grace which brings the subject nearer to God and enables him to receive all that God has to give him; and (2) a special grace proper to each different sacrament. Against this Reformed theology holds (1) that this makes the personal act of God in Christ disappear behind sacramental causation; and (2) that the personal relation of faith disappears behind the metaphysical and material effects of created grace.

This whole way of regarding grace as detachable from the person of Christ, and as quantitatively and qualitatively graduated, is quite foreign to the Bible and to the teaching of the Early Church. It results in a popular conception of saving grace as medicine applied through sacramental rites. In spite of the most subtle scholastic distinctions, aimed at avoiding the implications of crude materialization and impersonal mechanical operation, for the great mass of clergy and laity alike, the whole conception of the sacraments as causing grace *ex opere operato* cannot be kept free from crass error. No doubt the intention behind *ex opere operato* is to provide the Church with the strongest expression for man's unconditional need of God, and the supreme ultimate causality of God in the life of grace, but this is done only at the fearful cost of leading millions of people into blind superstition.

(*d*) The Scholastic Doctrine of Baptism.

According to Thomas (*Summ. Theol.* III.66-71) the essence of Baptism does not lie in the element or in the Word, but in the sacramental use in which both are involved. The stress is not upon the element as water, but on the act of washing. The Word refers to the pronouncing of the formula, and is reckoned part of the form of the sacrament. The formula is not pronounced as God's Word to the baptized so much as in order to consecrate the element. Baptism is effective because it has been instituted for that purpose by Christ in His own Baptism, and enjoined after His death and resurrection as a sacrament of the Church. Christ Himself remains always the Principal Minister of Baptism. It is He who really baptizes. From His passion and His Spirit the effect continues to be produced. Thomas does not, however, relate the institution of Baptism to Pentecost.

Baptism is essentially the sacrament of the passion of Christ, for by it men are made partakers of His passion and death. The punishment of the Head made a full satisfaction for the sins of all the members of His Body. Therefore, as Thomas cites from Augustine : " Baptism requires neither sigh nor groan, but faith alone."

Baptism is also the sacrament of regeneration in which men born in a state of original sin are freed from it. Because of the merits of Christ, this applies not only to the guilt of all sins but also to liability to punishment. For two reasons, however, Baptism does not take away the penalties of the present life until the resurrection : (1) because it is proper that the incorporated members of the Body should suffer and die like the Head, should like Him bear the Cross, and so with Him obtain the crown ; and (2) because men ought not to come to Baptism in order to avoid the sufferings of this present life, but rather in order to gain the glories of life eternal.

By Baptism Christ immediately takes away the defects of the *person*—viz., the guilt of original sin, the loss of the vision of God, and liability to the pains of hell. Not until the general resurrection does He take away the defects of the *nature*—viz., the pains of this present life, and the death of the body.

The main effects of Baptism are thus : (1) washing away of sin, (2) freedom from punishment, (3) incorporation into the Body of which Christ is the Head, (4) illumination with the knowledge of truth and impregnation with grace, in order that the baptized may be fruitful in virtues and good works.

The difficulty about Thomas' doctrine of Baptism emerges when one asks when and how these effects take place. Here we notice the characteristic difference between Thomas and Bonaventura. While the latter looked upon the water of Baptism as the sign of the inward cleansing of grace, Thomas thinks of a " certain instrumental virtue of sanctification " as operating in the water and entering into the baptized. The difference comes out clearly in his understanding of the indelible character conferred upon the baptized. In the Augustinian tradition baptismal character meant that while the outward act of ablution in the waters of Baptism passes away, the fact that a person is sacramentally baptized cannot be undone. Even if he becomes unfaithful, the fact that he has been baptized remains as a witness against him. In Thomas, on the other hand, this indelible character is interpreted as regeneration, through the impregnation of grace, and so is given a deeper significance. Although the justifying grace received at Baptism may be lost through sin, there still remains an effect which cannot be lost. This is a basic form of created grace which is necessary for the reception of justifying grace. This inalienable element of grace makes it possible for the apostate to receive justifying grace again if he returns in repentance and faith. Baptism, though of itself it is not sufficient for salvation, is thus necessary, and cannot be despised without damnation.

The difficulty of the " absolute necessity of Baptism " Thomas treats by distinguishing three kinds of Baptism : (1) The Baptism of water which conforms a man to Christ, and in which the passion of Christ operates by analogy. (2) The Baptism of the Spirit, also called the Baptism of desire or penitence, which moves a man to repentance, faith and love, and in which the passion of Christ operates by the interior working of the Spirit. (3) The Baptism of blood, through which a man attains the effect of Baptism by suffering for Christ, and in which the passion of Christ operates by imitation. The last two are called Baptisms because they supply the place of Baptism and produce its effect, though they are not official signs. Those who despise the sacrament and refuse to receive it cannot be saved, but those who are deprived of it by death or accident, but desire it, may be saved. The sacrament is, however, commanded,

and must be administered, particularly to infants who cannot yet desire it, for they, having it, cannot put an obstacle in its way, and so cannot but be saved. All men must receive Baptism, whether in reality or in desire, if they are to be incorporated into Christ, and saved.

It is clear, therefore, that though Thomas speaks of the sacrament as causing grace *ex opere operato*, he does not intend by that to make the sacraments merely mechanical events, thus ruling out faith. This is particularly clear in his doctrine of infant Baptism. In the case of adults, instruction and faith are required prior to Baptism; in the case of children Baptism is to be followed by instruction in the faith. As infants newly born are handed over to nurses and teachers to be nurtured and instructed, so in spiritual generation there is required someone who will receive the baptized from the holy font, and nurture, and inform, and instruct him in faith, Christian life, and worship. This is necessary in order to preserve and use the grace of Baptism. In Baptism the hindrance to salvation has been removed, but the baptized is not yet blessed. He may become blessed through faith and continuing in baptismal grace. As a fire warms those who keep near it rather than those removed from it, so baptismal grace, while remaining the same for all the baptized, affects them differently according to the use they make of it.

Thomas insists that Baptism is not to be administered to the unwilling or unrepentant, but he does not demand a specific act of confession. All that is required of the baptized is such a general confession of sins before God as is implied in his desire for a new life. It is sufficient to have a general intention to receive Baptism as Christ instituted it and as the Church administers it.

This desire to be as lenient as possible in baptismal requirements and administration opened the way for abuse by clergy and laity alike, especially as the temper of the age encouraged sheer formalism. This was, in fact, what actually happened before the Reformation.

5. SUMMARY OF OFFICIAL ROMAN DOCTRINE.

According to the *Roman Catechism* (2.1.4) a sacrament is defined as "a visible sign of invisible grace instituted for our justification," where by justification is meant the infusion of sanctifying grace through the Roman Catholic Church, which alone can dispense it, but with which the receiver must co-operate. The seven sacraments of the New Law are regarded as the exclusive means of grace. "All these sacraments are performed by the following three: by the things as matter, the words as form, and by the person of the minister conferring the sacrament with the intention of doing what the Church does. If any of these things is wanting, the sacrament is not performed" (Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 695).

In this series, "holy Baptism holds the first place of all the sacraments, because it is the door of spiritual life: for through it we are made members of Christ and of His Body the Church. And since through the first man death entered the world, unless we are born again of water and the Spirit, as the Truth says, we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven (John 3 : 5)" (Denz. 696). Baptism is defined, therefore, by the *Roman Catechism* (2.2.5) as "the sacrament of regeneration through water in the Word."

(*a*) The Essentials of Baptism.

(i) The *matter* of Baptism is natural water which may be either cold or warm (Denz. 412, 449, 696). This is called the "remote matter." The "proximate matter" is the ablution of the person by immersion, pouring,

or sprinkling, though the last is to-day no longer regarded as proper. Baptismal ablution may be single, representing the oneness of the death of Christ and the oneness of the Deity, or it may be threefold, representing the three days of Christ's burial and the Trinity of Divine Persons. To this simple ablution in water were added other ceremonies with salt, spittle, and oil, which, though not regarded as absolutely essential, are protected from contempt by the Council of Trent (Denz. 856). Use is made also of a white garment to indicate the participation of the baptized in the priesthood of Christ, and of a lighted candle to indicate that the power of darkness has been dispelled in Baptism by the light of salvation.

(ii) The *form* of Baptism comprises the words of the baptismal formula: "I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (or words equivalent to these, such as the form used in some Eastern Churches) (Denz. 686). The Word thus added to the element to make it a sacrament is not the preached Word of God in the Gospel, but the words of institution, which, when pronounced at Baptism, have consecrating effect upon the matter and on the receiver. Baptismal grace is regarded as flowing from the matter and the form used together.

(iii) The *minister* of Baptism is "a priest who in virtue of his office is competent to baptize [Denz. 106]. In case of necessity, however, not only a priest or a deacon, but even a layman or a woman, nay even a heathen or a heretic can baptize, so long as he keeps the form of the Church and intends to do what the Church does." The minister is "the instrumental cause," but "the principal cause from which Baptism derives its power is the Holy Trinity" (Denz. 696). It is not in the power of man to make earthly elements the means of divine grace. Thus the Church cannot make of water "the laver of the new birth," but it invokes the Holy Trinity, for such power belongs to God alone.

(*b*) The Effects of Baptism.

Baptism has the effect of removing any obstacle to entry into heaven (Denz. 792), and is the means whereby we are translated out of the state of original sin into the state of grace (Denz. 796). According to the Council of Nicæa, Baptism is for the remission of sins. This is interpreted to mean all sin, original and actual, before Baptism. The rebellion of the flesh persists after Baptism, but this is not interpreted as sin unless a person consents to it (Denz. 696, 899). Moreover, Baptism is the means whereby the merits of Christ are applied, and habitual grace (with infused virtue and charity) is poured into the recipient to justify, sanctify, and renew him, making him a member of Christ and His Church, and enabling him to receive the other sacraments (Denz. 483, 695f., 790, 792, 799f., 864, 870, 895, &c.).

The sacrament of Baptism is effective in that it contains, causes, and confers grace *ex opere operato* in those who rightly receive it (Denz. 483, 695, 849-851). Baptism is not the final nor the efficient cause of justification. It is the instrumental cause, and, as such, is absolutely necessary (Denz. 799, 861). It is admitted, however, that the place of water-Baptism can be taken by Baptism through blood in martyrdom, or Baptism through desire in cases of necessity (Denz. 796). Baptism is not sufficient for salvation, for the grace it confers requires the co-operation of the recipient. If he puts any hindrance such as mortal sin in the way of it, he will lose it. Yet it does confer an indelible character in the sense that the baptized is given a spiritual seal which cannot be lost, and which will always make it possible for him to make use of the other means of grace in the Church,

such as the sacraments of confirmation or penance, in order to recover justifying grace (Denz. 411f., 695, 849, 852).

On the other hand the Council of Trent explicitly anathematized the teaching of the Reformers that Baptism is efficacious not merely for past sin, but also for the sin of the whole life, and that the believer may always turn to it and, on the ground of his Baptism, receive and be assured of forgiveness and justification (Denz. 866). The reason for this anathema is that for the Roman Church Baptism is a sacrament of infused grace, not the sign and seal of once and for all justification in Christ. Therefore, on the Roman view, Baptism operates effectively only through the stream of grace in the whole series of sacraments, whereas for the Reformers Baptism is effective for our justification because of the promise of Christ which it seals to us, and because of His saving presence with us through His Word and Spirit (cf. W. Niesel, *Symbolik*, p. 63).

(c) The Recipients of Baptism.

Since all men are born with original sin, Baptism should be extended to all as the "perfect remedy unto salvation" for adults and children alike (Denz. 482). If it is to be effective, Baptism must be rightly received. This means that from those who have come to years of discretion, faith and intention are required or saving grace will not be received. In the case of infants who are unable to hinder grace, it is sufficient that they be presented by a sponsor and baptized by the ministry of the Church. Baptism confers upon them grace, including a title to the possession of heaven, for through the sacrament they are snatched away from the dominion of Satan and adopted to be children of God (Denz. 410f., 482f., 574A, 712, &c.). Moreover, in Baptism infused virtue or the capacity for faith is bestowed upon the child, even though he does not exercise it until he grows older. If he dies before then, he is saved; but as he grows to years of discretion, faith and co-operation are necessary for the exercise of justifying grace. This is the reason for the sacrament of confirmation (*Cat. Rom.* 2.3.20, Denz. 520, 697).

The Roman Church claims to be the sole dispenser of grace. Therefore, even if Baptism be validly performed outwith the Roman Church, the sacrament does not actually confer grace until the baptized person submits to the Roman Church. Only then does he receive the proper effect of his Baptism. If this Baptism has been validly given in the name of the Trinity, and with the intention of doing what the Roman Church does in it, then it cannot be repeated. Nevertheless, conditional Baptism is frequently administered according to a prescribed form (Denz. 335, 696, 850, 860) on the ground that Baptisms outside the Roman Church are usually but empty ceremonies.

III. BAPTISM IN THE CHURCHES OF THE REFORMATION.

To turn from the theology of the Roman Church in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to the theology of the Reformation is to pass into a different sphere, in which the whole outlook has been radically altered. The face of the Church now turned directly toward the Biblical revelation, and there emerge an evangelical theology, joyful in its rediscovery of the Gospel and in its liberation from the rigid forms of Aristotelian philosophy and canon law. It was a break away from the Latin conception of God

and nature to the Living God of the Bible, who actively intervenes in the affairs of men : the Lord and Judge of history, the God and Father of Jesus Christ.

This change in the doctrine of God meant a radical change in theology. To mediæval theology God was the Principal Cause, the Supreme Being, the Ultimate meaning of nature. Theology, therefore, was concerned to arrange our knowledge of heaven and earth in a logical system, using the impersonal conceptions of cause for the Divine Being and of effect for every created being. The whole Gospel of grace was cast into this impersonal mould, and grace itself was understood to operate physically through sacramental media, transforming man's being in an impersonal way, and completing his nature by supra-natural infusions. The main interest of theology, therefore, was focused upon the causal operation of this grace and upon its institutional control in and by the Church.

From this the Reformers turned, concentrating their attention supremely upon the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, the Mediator, who, as God and Man, has once and for all wrought out our reconciliation in His death and resurrection on our behalf, who has now ascended the throne of God, and who will come again as Saviour and Judge. By His Word and Spirit Jesus Christ dwells in the midst of His Church on earth, making it His Body. Through His Church, by His Word and Spirit, the Gospel of forgiveness is freely proclaimed to all men, and is effective for their salvation. Theology is now concerned with hearing the Word of God in the midst of the Church, where Christ comes to reveal Himself, and with the ministry of that Word in the preaching and teaching of the Gospel. In this way the Reformers were led to reject as irreconcilable with the Gospel the claim of the Roman Church, as a sacramental organism, to be the extension of the Incarnation, the prolongation of the Atonement, and therefore to have exclusive possession of the means of grace. For the Reformers the Church is, above all, the People of God. It is the community of the faithful, where the Word of God is truly preached and the sacraments of the Gospel are rightly dispensed. Through it Christ graciously adopts as members of His Body all who believe.

The Churches of the Reformation were at one in their desire to penetrate behind the theological corruption of the Roman Church and, by returning to the Biblical revelation and the teaching of the Early Church, to restore the full content of the Gospel and the true order of discipleship in Christ. This they did accomplish with remarkable unity. But there were significant differences among them, resulting in Churches of three main types—Lutheran, Calvinist or Reformed, and Anglican—with characteristic differences also in the doctrine of Baptism. To these we now turn, examining their teaching about Baptism in that order.

1. BAPTISM IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

More than any other Church of the Reformation the Lutheran Church bears the mark of one man. We must therefore turn mainly to the teaching of Luther himself in order to get the Lutheran doctrine of Baptism.

(a) Development of Luther's Early Thought.

Though his theology was at first abstractly " spiritual " and strongly subjective, Luther afterwards came to realize the necessary objectivity of the sacraments which he found in the Word of God. This change involved a movement away from impersonalized conceptions of sacred institutions and of grace towards a stress upon the spiritual and personal operation of grace. But it was only when he began to realize that salvation and justifica-

tion are lodged in Christ Himself, and are freely given to us by His Word, that Luther made the great discovery that laid the foundation for the whole of Reformed teaching.

When he turned from the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard to Scripture as the text-book for his theological lectures, Luther came to think of *sacramentum* as nearer the New Testament *mysterion* (of which *sacramentum* was the Latin translation), with its idea of the secret revelation of God apprehended only by faith. At the same time he rediscovered the Augustinian formula of "Word and Sacrament." The Word is the Gospel and brings to us God's saving work. It is because of the Word that the sacraments are efficacious for our salvation. Here already we see Luther's stress upon the primacy of the Word, for though Word and sacrament belong together, it is possible to have the Word without the sacraments, but not the sacraments without the Word.

When he said anything about Baptism at this stage in his thought, Luther was interested only in "spiritual" events or a "spiritual" experience. For him the "clean heart" was essential, and this was to be found in faith, in confession of sins, and in the patient endurance of what God lays upon us. He saw in John's Baptism a pointing forward to the real Baptism, the "Baptism of the Spirit" through the inward Word. This real Baptism results in a spiritual change, for in Baptism man is transplanted out of his original sin, and out of the dominion of sin and the law, into the dominion and freedom of Christ. By insisting on giving faith a part in the operation of Baptism, Luther made a distinct advance towards a personalist understanding of grace. Word and sacrament together mean the actualising of personal grace.

In Luther's development, shortly before the Reformation, the sacraments came to occupy a much more prominent place than they had before. Although his emphasis upon spiritual renewal became even more subjective, to this he added an increased emphasis on the Word. In the last resort, the whole conception of Baptism as essentially "spiritual" belongs to his growing protest against the externalizing of the divine activity in outward operations.

In all this are to be discerned the seeds of the characteristic Lutheran teaching on the sacraments. It is not surprising, then, that shortly after the crisis that entailed Luther's break with the Roman Church, when he had occasion to write about Baptism, we find several outstanding contrasts between his doctrine and the usual teaching of the Roman theologians.

(i) Baptism is no longer correlated simply with the removal of original sin, but is concerned with the whole forward direction of the new life in Christ.

(ii) Baptism is now concerned with all sin and its forgiveness and is valid for the whole of life, so that repentance, confession and penance rest entirely upon Baptism as the sacrament of total and once for all forgiveness or justification.

(iii) Luther's characteristic doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is grounded on Baptism. This idea was certainly found in the Fathers, and even in the mediæval theologians, but was never given the same importance by them as by Luther.

(iv) Baptism is correlated in the closest possible way with the mighty, active, living Word of God, the Creator and Redeemer. This was the aspect which Luther came to stress more and more, and which most clearly distinguishes the teaching of the Reformers from that of the Roman Church. It is of such importance that a fuller account of it must be given before we go on to expound in detail Luther's mature views upon the doctrine of Baptism.

(*b*) Word and Sacrament.

Luther took from Augustine his doctrine of the togetherness of Word and sacrament. Two typical sentences from Augustine's Homilies on St John have to be noted. "God begets sons through the Church. . . . Spiritually we are born, and in the Spirit we are born by Word and sacrament." "The Word is added to the element, and it becomes a sacrament." The sacrament depends on the primacy of the Word, but it is through the Word and sacrament together that God builds up His Church and regenerates men. This conception of the Word had been lost in the mediæval world, where the Word meant only the sacramental formula or the words of consecration. It was denied that the Word as such was a means of grace, and the sermon was regarded only as moral preparation for the reception of grace in the sacraments. But for Luther the Word was the primary means of grace, for it is Jesus Christ Himself who comes through His Word, clothed with all His saving power in the Gospel. The creative Word of God became flesh in Christ, but that Word is now sent out through the Apostles and through the preaching of the Church into all the world as the means whereby salvation and regeneration are offered and bestowed upon men. For Luther, "the Word of God alone is the vehicle of grace" (Seeberg).

In the Augustinian tradition a distinction was made between the inner and the outer, between the visible and the invisible, a distinction that was applied to the Word as well as to the sacraments. This distinction Luther carried over into the Reformation. But after the Reformation had set in, this Augustinian dualism between the "inner" and the "outer Word," together with the protest against the Roman externalizing and materializing of religion, led many to depreciate the "outer Word" and the outward and visible signs in the sacraments. Luther found himself fighting for the Gospel not only against the Papacy, but against "spiritual" enthusiasts who taught a doctrine of salvation by inward experience alone, and who were entirely concerned with what they called "the inner call," "the heavenly voice."

In reacting against all this, Luther came more and more to lay the primary emphasis upon the Word of God. Rejecting the Augustinian tradition of dualism and subjectivism, he now expounded a doctrine of the Word, in which "the outer Word" and "the inner word," or the Spirit, though distinct, are not separable. Through the Gospel God deals with us in two ways, outwardly and inwardly. Outwardly He deals with us through the spoken Word of the Gospel, and through the physical signs of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Inwardly God deals with us through the Holy Spirit and faith and the other gifts of the Spirit. God always operates in such a way that "the inward comes after and through the outward, and so God has decreed that He will not give any man the inward thing except through the outward thing" (W.A., 18.136f, 33.189f., 45.522, &c.). Word and sacrament must be understood in the closest possible connexion. Neither in regard to the inward illumination nor in regard to sacramental experience can we go one step further than does the Word which we hear in the Scriptures.

In this way Luther insisted upon the close and inseparable bond between the inward and the outward, between the Word and the sacraments, and between the Word and the Spirit. Certainly the Spirit of God is not bound to visible ordinances, for He goes where He will in His sovereign freedom, but God's Spirit does not come to men except through the revelation and reconciliation of the Word. We, on our part, are entirely bound to that

Word as it delivers itself to us through the written and spoken Word of the Gospel.

What, then, is the Word ? The Word of God is Christ Himself, the Word made flesh. It is also the Gospel of Christ which is preached to us through the Apostles and from the Apostolic Scriptures. Christ and the Gospel belong together, for we do not have Christ except through the Gospel, and the Gospel apart from Christ is nothing at all. It is Christ, clothed with His Gospel, coming to us, in the power of His Kingdom, through the Scriptures, who is the Word of God.

And what is a sacrament ? A sacrament is Christ Himself, for, as Luther says, only Christ is called *sacramentum* or *mysterion* in the Scriptures. He alone is the Word of God made flesh, the Word of Life seen with the eyes and handled with the hands. But He comes to us through the ordinances of the Word and sacraments, and delivers Himself to us through them, using them as His instruments through which He gives Himself to us in forgiveness and justification and in all His grace and power.

(c) Luther's Doctrine of Baptism.

Here we seek to give Luther's mature views of Baptism in some detail. We shall follow the order of exposition in his Larger Catechism (IV.1-86), drawing also from his other important works and from the Lutheran confessions based on his teaching.

(i) *The Word of God and Baptism.*

Baptism is provisionally defined as the sacrament " through which we are first of all co-opted into the Christian communion." As such it was instituted by Christ after His Resurrection in words recorded in St Matthew 28 : 19 and St Mark 16 : 16. By His own Baptism in the Jordan Christ consecrated Baptism as a " bath to wash away our transgressions and to quench the bitterness of death by His own blood and Passion, and to renew our life," as Luther put it in his beautiful hymn, " Christ our Lord to Jordan came "—a hymn which had its influence on the Scottish Reformation through *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis*. But although Luther grounds Baptism on the historical acts of Christ, he is more concerned to show how it depends on Christ's Word of institution. Because it is commanded by Him we must have no doubt about the fact that " it is a divine thing, and not thought up or invented by man " (L.C., IV.6).

For Luther, then, it is the relation to the Word of God which is the fundamental fact about Baptism. In answer to the question, " What is Baptism ? " the Smaller Catechism gives the answer : " Baptism is not simply common water, but it is water in the grip of God's command, and bound to the Word " (IV.1). Here Luther took his stand by Augustine, who had said, " Let the Word be added to the element and it becomes a Sacrament," and not by Aquinas and the Dominicans, who held that God had set a spiritual power in the water which washes away sins through water (cf. S.A., V.1). Luther spoke of God's Word as " given and planted in the water " so that in this outer thing which He sets before us we can grasp the treasure within it. This joining together of Word and water in God's command makes of Baptism a " divine and holy thing " (L.C., IV.18). More and more Luther came to lay the emphasis upon the commanding, promising, creative Word of God in Baptism, and found in it the true objectivity of Baptism, in opposition to the false objectivity of the Roman Church.

By the Word, of course, is meant the Person behind the Word, the Person who speaks the Word instituting Baptism, and in whose Name we

are to baptize. But because the Person is more important than the work we are commanded to do, we have to judge the work by the Person. The emphasis has to be put on the action of God, not on the element of water, nor on the action of the minister. We must distinguish, then, between the human minister of Baptism and "God the Doer." Man baptizes, for he performs the work; but he does not baptize, for he officiates not by his own authority but by God's. Hence we are to receive Baptism at the hands of men just as if God were baptizing us with His own hands (cf. W.M.L., II.224).

The Word spoken by God in Baptism has a manifold character. It is God's command, and therefore it must not be doubted or under-estimated or treated lightly as a vain thing. Even if to all outward appearances it seems to be of less significance than a blade of grass or a straw or an empty nut-shell, it is commanded by God and bound up with His honour, and bears the seal of His majesty (L.C., IV.6ff). The Word of God in Baptism is also God's Name (L.C., IV.27). To be baptized into God's Name means to be incorporated into that Name and all it stands for. The Word of God in Baptism means God's Promise. Here Luther found a source of great consolation and grace, and the justification for Infant Baptism (cf. S.A., V.4). The Word of God in Baptism is God's Covenant (cf. W.M.L., I.60). It is through this covenant that God grants us forgiveness, and it is a covenant that never changes. Even if we prove unfaithful, God remains faithful.

Luther's stress on the primacy of the Word in Baptism made it clear that water-Baptism is nothing in itself. Its whole significance lies in the fact that in Baptism the water is annexed to the Word, and given a significance not in itself but in the Word.

(ii) *What Baptism Gives.*

Following on his insistence upon the inseparability of Word and water in Baptism, Luther goes on to define the benefits of Baptism thus: "It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declare" (S.C., IV.2). Such benefits, he keeps declaring, do not derive from the water, but from the Word which is with and in the water, and from faith, which trusts in the Word of God in the water.

Baptism and its benefits are given a rich content.

(1) *Forgiveness of Sins.*—In contrast to the accepted notion of Baptism as concerned only with original and past sin, Luther now claims that Baptism comprehends the whole of our life, and restores us to favour with God. For Luther, then, forgiveness of sins in Baptism means not only once and for all justification by the grace of Christ, but also a continual dying and rising again until death and resurrection in the last day. Baptism is thus a sacramental counterpart of the doctrine of justification and of the doctrine of *iustus et peccator*. Sacramentally our forgiveness and renewal are imputed to us in Baptism; but deliverance from the power of sin has only begun, and reaches out to the resurrection of the body.

(2) *Redemption.*—Baptism is redemption from the power of death and the devil. Both body and soul experience this freedom from tyranny, and the baptized man can receive strength and comfort from the assurance that he has been baptized. To be able to say, "I am baptized," gave to Luther a profound and settled assurance when he was tempted to doubt.

(3) *Washing of Regeneration.*—Baptism is the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. It is the sacrament of the new birth in Christ. This means three things for Luther. It means that we are translated out of the dominion of evil and put into the lap of Christ; from being slaves of sin and of the devil we are made children of God. It means being

clothed with Christ, being adorned with Christ and all His works, with the Holy Spirit and all His gifts (L.C., IV.41). It means that the new birth is a permanent and enduring event that runs through the whole of life and reaches out into the resurrection from the dead when it will be wholly fulfilled. Regeneration thus embraces the whole of life and cannot be dissociated from daily repentance and the whole life of faith (cf. S.C., IV.4). Not only is grace offered in Baptism, but the baptized are received into the grace of God.

(iii) *Faith and Baptism.*

In his debate with the Anabaptists, Luther came to define more clearly his position regarding faith and Baptism. The two, he maintained, cannot be separated. "Faith alone makes a person worthy to receive this saving and divine water to his advantage" (L.C., IV.33). Faith, however, is dependent on the Word which constitutes the sacrament.

This does not mean that the truth and reality of Baptism depend on faith. "Faith does not make Baptism but receives it" (*id.*, 53). The truth and reality of Baptism depend on God's Word, and whether a man be faithful or not, God's Word remains true and His ordinances remain what they are. In this way Luther met the Anabaptist claim that because a man has not received his Baptism in true faith it is not real Baptism. "For God's ordinance and God's Word will not allow itself to be altered and changed by men" (*id.*, 60).

On the other hand Luther taught that Baptism awakens faith. "The sacraments are given by God in order to arouse and confirm faith in those that use them" (A.C., 13). Baptism is to be received in faith, but this faith is to be expected in Baptism as God's answer to the prayer of the Church. "Unless this faith be present or conferred in Baptism, Baptism will profit us nothing, nay, it becomes a hindrance to us, not only in the moment of its reception, but all the days of our life" (W.M.L., II.220).

(iv) *The Baptism of Infants.*

Luther's teaching on Infant Baptism follows from his view of Baptism as comprehended in the Word of God, and as bestowing faith and requiring faith for its fruitful use. To this the child is bound in his Baptism.

(*a*) Not only the use of Baptism by the recipient but the dispensing of Baptism by the Church require faith and are unfruitful without it. The child is baptized in the midst of the Church, and in the context of its intercession for the child. The strongest emphasis is laid upon this intercession by Luther, intercession not only by the congregation, but also by the godparents. The child is not baptized on the ground of the faith of others, but in the midst of the believing Church which brings it to Baptism with the hope and prayer that God will bless it, initiate it, and sanctify it in the simple faith of His Word.

(*b*) The child is baptized in the faith that God keeps the Word of His covenant. In support of this teaching, Luther appealed to the passages in the Gospels which are concerned with little children : St Matthew 18 : 19 ; 19 : 13-15 ; St Mark 10 : 13-16 ; St Luke 18 : 15, 16. According to the Word, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not," it is proper, right, and necessary to bring children to Christ in Baptism. It is thus that Christ blesses them and gives them the Kingdom of Heaven. When they are brought to Christ and are baptized by the minister, he acts in Christ's stead, for the minister's words and acts are Christ's words and acts. It is Christ's Baptism and His work.

(*c*) The stress, however, is upon the Word of God which lays hold of Baptism and of those who are baptized. This is the ground upon which

we baptize adults and children alike. A child is brought to Baptism in the earnest expectation that he will believe, and we pray that God will give him faith. Yet we do not baptize him on that ground, but on the ground that God has commanded it. As we have seen, Luther came more and more to lay emphasis upon the commanding, promising and creative Word of God in Baptism, in opposition to the false objectivity of the *opus operatum* of the Roman Church. Baptism has an objective character apart from faith, since it is grounded on God's Word as covenant. But God's Word is also promise, and as such encourages us to baptize children.

(*d*) The subsequent life of faith is of the utmost importance when considering Luther's teaching on Infant Baptism. Children have to be taught to make use of their Baptism, to claim the promises made to them in Baptism, and to learn how in faith to enter into the inheritance which is theirs in the Kingdom of Heaven. If Baptism can be achieved without faith, the fruits of Baptism cannot. The fruits of Baptism may be received long after Baptism. They may also be lost when faith is rejected and denied. Because of this possibility, Luther, as against the Anabaptists who claimed that a man who did not believe at his Baptism or fell into spiritual trouble must be baptized all over again, maintained that for such a man the main concern was to claim the promises of God. " He who did not actually believe at his Baptism, let him now believe in the gracious promise revealed concerning him in his Baptism which is still in force " (L.C., IV.56). The truth of Baptism -that is, of the divine promise pronounced over us in Baptism -continues and never ceases, and is everlastingly steadfast.

(v) *What the Baptismal Rite Signifies.*

Luther closed the teaching about Baptism in his *Larger Catechism* with a section on this question. It may be summarized thus :—

(*a*) Immersing in water and emerging out of it again signify the killing of the old Adam and the resurrection of the new man. For Luther this is no mere figure of speech but an actual experience. Because Baptism means death and resurrection, Luther showed a preference for complete immersion, " not that I deem this necessary, but it were well to give to so perfect and complete a thing, a perfect and complete sign. Thus it was doubtless instituted by Christ."

(*b*) As against the view that penance is a third sacrament, " a sort of second plank after shipwreck," Luther claimed that Baptism comprehends penance. " Repentance is a constant return to Baptism and an entering into its significance, into its dying and rising again by faith."

(*c*) Such faith is a daily and life-long necessity. " If then we want to be Christians we must sedulously exercise ourselves in the work of Baptism that we may deserve the name of Christian."

(*d*) For the man who falls away from his Baptism there is the promise of God in Christ. " As Jesus Christ, who is the Mercy Seat does not withdraw from us nor prevent us from approaching Him again even though we have sinned, so also His treasure and His gift remain. As the forgiveness of sin is once received in Baptism, so it remains day by day as long as we live, that is, as long as we carry the old man about our neck " (L.C., IV.84f.).

2. BAPTISM IN THE REFORMED CHURCH.

While Calvin did not come to occupy the same position in the Reformed Churches as Luther did in the Lutheran ones, his influence was nevertheless dominant, and all the Reformed Confessions and Catechisms bear the imprint of his teaching.

(*a*) Calvin's Teaching on the Sacraments.

The doctrine of union with Christ is a central conception in the *Institutes*. In the third book Calvin expounds the evangelical content of this doctrine, and in the forth book he expounds the doctrine of the Church as the sphere where that union with Christ is effectively mediated through the ministry of the Word and sacraments. In other words the place of the sacraments is within the Church, and their function is to create and nourish our union with Christ in faith and life. If the mediæval theologians thought of the efficacy of the sacraments as derived from the Church, and Luther thought of the Church as entirely dependent upon the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, Calvin tended to take a middle course. To understand his position it is necessary to see the significance of his conception of the Covenant.

(i) *Covenant and Sacrament.*

The Covenant represents the gracious will of Eternal God to commit Himself to His people, and to take them into communion with Himself. With the Covenant the Church was brought into being as the divinely appointed sphere of union and communion with God through the Word and sacraments. "In the beginning, antecedently to this Covenant, the condition of the whole world was one and the same. But as soon as it was said, 'I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee,' the Church was separated from other nations . . ." (*Comm.* on Gen. 17 : 7). There are several important features of Calvin's understanding of the Covenant that bear upon his doctrine of the sacraments.

(1) The Covenant describes the sphere of God's revealing and redeeming action in history. It is essentially "the covenant of grace," or "the covenant of the Gospel."

The Covenant provides a special sphere of communication in history quite distinct from any so-called "sacramental universe." It contains "a spiritual mystery to typify the spiritual quickening that is obtained in Christ," and is therefore "sealed by spiritual sacraments" (*Inst.* II. x. 6). These are special signs given with the explicit command and promise of God, with "a mark engraven on them by the Word of God to be proofs and seals of His Covenant" (*ib.* IV. xiv. 8).

In the Covenant God realizes His will to unite us to Himself, and to give Himself to us as our God. The sacraments are used by God to initiate and to maintain us in this covenanted fellowship. They function only within the sphere of God's revealing and reconciling activity.

(2) The corporate character of the Covenant makes the sacraments corporate also. The Covenant was made with Abraham and his seed, and was instituted for "the whole Church." Thus the very nature of the Covenant excludes private sacraments. This is for Calvin so important that he gives a whole chapter to it (*Inst.* IV. xiii). He admits that there is a place for private vows, as acts of thanksgiving and repentance, but there is "one vow common to all believers" which is the all-comprehending

Covenant of grace attested by vows taken before God and man, and it is only within this corporate vow or covenant that the sacraments are to take place.

(3) There is only one Covenant: therefore the essential sacraments of the Old Testament correspond to those of the New; but the differences in economy and administration between the Old Testament and the New lead to corresponding differences between their sacraments (*ib.* II. x. 1).

Calvin is insistent that the substance or content of the Old Covenant is the same as that of the New: they are but one Covenant under two forms. In the Old form of the Covenant, God took His people into communion with Himself, and promised to be with them as their God; but in the New form of the Covenant "God fulfilled what He had promised, these promises being realized in the person of the Son" (*ib.* II. x. 2). Christ is "the substance" of both forms of the Covenant: in the Old Covenant He was offered in a promise that was to be fulfilled in the future; in the New Covenant He is offered as the One in whom all the promises have already been realized.

From this two corollaries follow:—

> (*a*) Because the Covenant is fulfilled in Christ, the Covenant-union with God is fulfilled in the Church as the Body of Christ. This union with Christ is of the very essence of the New Covenant. For this reason personal and sacramental union with Christ transcends the form of union with God under ceremony and law.
>
> (*b*) Because the sacraments of the New Testament are signs and seals of the New Covenant in Christ, they are signs and seals of union with Christ, and with the Church which is His Body. The sacraments appropriate to the Incarnation are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These were "delivered to the Christian Church, to be used from the beginning of the New Testament to the end of the world, Baptism being a kind of entrance into the Church, an initiation into the faith, and the Lord's Supper the constant aliment by which Christ spiritually feeds His family of believers. Wherefore, as there is but one God, one faith, one Christ, one Church, which is His Body, so Baptism is one, and is not repeated. But the Supper is ever and again dispensed, to intimate that those who are once drawn into the Church are constantly fed by Christ. Besides these two no other has been instituted by God, and no other ought to be recognized by the assembly of the faithful" (*ib.* IV. xviii. 19).

This change from the sacraments of the Law to the sacraments of the Gospel carries with it a radical change in character. As evangelical sacraments, they must not be treated as "sacraments of the New Law," as Gratian and the Schoolmen attempted to do, when they sought to make them derive their authority from ecclesiastical canons or correct administration. The sacraments are not instruments of the law, but instruments of the Gospel; and they have to be used and dispensed accordingly.

(ii) *The Word and the Sacraments.*

Calvin points out that the word *sacramentum* was used by the old Latin translator of the New Testament to translate *mysterion*, especially when used of *divine things*. He cites Eph. 1 : 9 ; 3 : 2 ; Col. 1 : 26 ; 1 Tim. 3 : 16 ; which refer to the revelation of the mystery fulfilled in the Incarnation. *Sacramentum* then came to be "applied to those signs which gave an august representation of things spiritual and sublime" (*Inst.* IV. xiv. 2). In this, however, the word *sacramentum* was given a new signification. There had been one use of the word *sacramentum* applicable in Latin to a

sign : the formal oath which a soldier gave to his commander on enlisting. The Early Church took over this usage in a changed form, and " made it the act whereby the *commander admits* soldiers to his ranks " (*ib.* IV. xiv. 13). Thus the Christian use of *sacramentum* refers primarily to what Christ does, and only secondarily to what we do. A simple definition of a sacrament, therefore, might be : " It is an external sign by which the Lord seals on our consciences His promises of good-will toward us, in order to sustain the weakness of our faith, and we in turn testify our piety toward Him, both before Him, and before angels as well as men " (*ib.* IV. xiv. 1).

This way of stating the relation between the *objective* and the *subjective* reference of the sacraments is characteristic of Calvin. Thus, *e.g.*, the *Catechism of Geneva* lays the stress first upon the objective aspect, and then, much later, and after giving its teaching about both sacraments, it asks : " Have these two sacraments besides no other purpose ? " and answers : " They are also marks and as it were badges of our profession," &c. (cf. W. Niesel, *Symbolik*, p. 210). These objective and subjective aspects of the sacraments are to be understood as aspects of union with Christ, for that is the *mystery* or *divine thing* which they signify and exhibit.

(1) *The Primacy of the Word.*—A sacrament is essentially a divine institution, and is " not of earth, but of heaven, not of men but of God only " (*Inst.* IV. xix. 12). " God alone can give the sign and bear witness to Himself " (*ib.* IV. xviii. 19). " The Word of God must precede to make a sacrament to be a sacrament " (*ib.* IV. xix. 2).

To support this primary emphasis upon the Word of God in the sacraments, Calvin, like Luther, cites Augustine : " Take away the Word, and the water is neither more nor less than water : the Word is added to the element, and there results the sacrament as itself also a kind of visible Word " (*In. Joann.* xv. 1-3). Accordingly, " a sacrament consists of the Word and the external sign " (*Inst.* IV. xiv. 4). Thus Calvin thinks of the external sign as so stamped or inscribed with the Word that it is given " a new form " or " a new nature."

By Word, however, Calvin means more than the antecedent promise to which the sacrament is attached. He means " the Word preached which makes us understand what the visible sign means " (*ib.* IV. xiv. 4). On the other hand, the sacraments " present Christ more familiarly to us," and through them we are " led by the hand to that to which the sign tends and directs us " (*ib. loc. cit.*). God thus " accommodates Himself to our weakness and earthly capacity," and " comes down to us, even at this day, by Baptism and the Lord's Supper " (*Inst.* IV. xiv. 3).

" First, the Lord teaches and trains us by His Word ; next, He confirms us by His sacraments ; lastly, He illumines our mind by the light of His Holy Spirit, and opens up an entrance into our hearts for His Word and sacraments, which would otherwise only strike our ears, and fall upon our sight, and by no means affect us inwardly " (*ib.* IV. xiv. 8).

(2) *The Sacraments and Faith.*—The very fact that the sacraments are bound to the Word as signs and seals means that they cannot be used efficaciously without faith. " In order that you may not have a sign devoid of truth, but the thing with the sign, the Word which is included in it must be apprehended by faith " (*ib.* IV. xiv. 15).

The Lutherans Westphal and Heshusen attacked Calvin at this point for making the sacraments too intellectual. His long replies to them, and his discussion in the *Institutes* make his position quite clear.

(*a*) Faith is far more than intellectual assent. At its heart lies a union with Christ in which the whole person is involved. This union has two aspects : from the side of God it is nothing else than " the bond of the Spirit," " the sacred marriage " which the Spirit Himself creates between man and God ; from the side of man it is faith, but faith as the human

response is " the special gift of God " (*ib.* III. i. 1-4, &c.). This is the union with Christ in the Spirit and in faith which God generates and increases through the Word and sacraments.

(*b*) Faith-union with Christ has thus an objective and a subjective aspect : its objective aspect is the supernatural operation of the Spirit, generating and increasing faith ; its subjective aspect is man's faith, his reliance upon God's Word, and upon His sacramental institutions. This subjective aspect is dependent upon the objective aspect, which is primary. This is why Calvin speaks of the sacraments primarily as signs and seals of God's action, and only secondarily as attestations of our faith. Speaking of the Anabaptists, he says : " We do not approve of their action in making what is the secondary thing in the sacraments the first and indeed the only thing. The first thing is that they contribute to our faith in God ; the secondary, that they attest our confession before men " (*ib.* IV. xiv. 13).

(*c*) This faith-union is much more than an operation of the Spirit on the one hand and the response of faith on the other. In it we are given so to share in Christ and all that He did in giving to God an account for us, that our response of faith rests upon His perfect obedience as its foundation. " The thing requisite must be not only to be partakers of Christ's Spirit, but also to participate in His humanity, in which He rendered all obedience to God His Father, in order to satisfy our debts, although, properly speaking, the one cannot be without the other ; for when He gives Himself to us, it is in order that we may possess Himself entirely " (*Short Tr. on the Lord's Supper*, 13). This is one of Calvin's most important contributions to the doctrine of the sacraments. It results from his conception of the atonement as wrought out by the whole course of Christ's obedience on our behalf in His life and death. Our participation in that is what Calvin calls the *substance* or the *matter* of the sacraments.

(*d*) Another characteristic element is Calvin's doctrine of implicit faith. He repudiates entirely the Roman notion of implicit faith : willingness to submit one's convictions implicitly to the Church, or readiness to allow one's implication in the faith of the Church to take the place of personal conviction. For Calvin implicit faith is something quite different. It means that faith is never self-sufficient. It is always dependent on the Word above and beyond itself. Faith has a tiny beginning. It grows as it is nourished by the Word and sacraments, but even then it is still imperfect. So long as we are pilgrims advancing in knowledge of Christ, faith will always in a measure remain implicit. Resulting from this conception of faith is Calvin's understanding of Baptism as the sign and seal of regeneration, for both faith and regeneration reach out through the whole of our life to their consummation in the resurrection.

(3) *Repudiation of Roman Doctrine.*—Calvin explicitly condemns as pestilential heresies the two Roman ideas that a secret virtue inheres in the sacraments of the new law, and that in themselves they justify and cause grace, provided only that we do not interpose the obstacle of mortal sin. " All the trifling talk of the Schoolmen concerning *opus operatum* is not only false but repugnant to the very nature of the sacraments, which God appointed in order that believers who are void and in want of all good, might bring nothing of their own, but simply beg " (*Inst.* IV. xiv. 26). On the other hand Calvin insists that God uses the sacraments as " means and instruments under which He dispenses His blessings to us " *ib.* IV. xiv. 12). " God truly performs whatever He promises and figures by signs ; nor are the signs without effect, for they prove that He is their true and faithful author. The only question here is, whether the Lord works by proper and intrinsic virtue (as it is called), or resigns His office to external symbols. We maintain, that whatever organs He employs detract nothing from His primary operation. . . . Here, also, we ought

to observe, that what the minister figures and attests by outward action, God performs inwardly, lest that which God claims for Himself should be ascribed to mortal man" (*ib.* IV. xiv. 17).

The deepest difference between Calvin's doctrine and that of the Roman Church is concerned with the relation of the sacraments to the person of Christ. In the Roman doctrine the focus is upon the sacramental rite, and what is performed in it—the *opus operatum*; for Calvin the sacraments by their very nature point away from themselves and direct our attention to Christ alone. "Christ is the matter, or, if you rather choose it, the substance of all the sacraments, since in Him they have their whole solidity, and out of Him they promise nothing. Hence the less toleration is due to the error of Peter Lombard, who distinctly makes them causes of the righteousness and salvation of which they are parts" (*ib.* IV. xiv. 16).

This Christological orientation of the sacraments means that the sacraments take their nature from Christ Himself. Therefore it is the doctrine of Christ that gives us the true understanding of the sacraments and of the relation between the sign and the thing signified. The "sacramental union," as Calvin called it, between the sign and its reality is a mystery that reposes upon the mystery of Christ Himself. Therefore the sacramental union or correspondence between the sign and its reality is to be interpreted after the analogy of the union of the divine and human natures, without confusion and without separation, in the person of Christ (cf. R. S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament*, chap. xiii).

(4) *The Nature of the Sacraments.*—This Christological correction of the Roman doctrine of the sacraments led Calvin to revise the mediæval terminology and to adopt one from the Early Church. He employs three words with special meaning: the *signification*, the *matter* which depends on it, and the *power* or *effect* consequent upon both.

(*a*) By *signification* Calvin means not the outward symbolism so much as the thing signified. There are two things here: "the corporeal signs, which, presented to the eye, represent invisible things adapted to our weak capacity, and the spiritual truth at once figured and extended through the signs (*Inst.* IV. xvii. 11). Even the outward signs, however, must have a correspondence or analogy to the thing signified, as for example between cleansing with water in Baptism and cleansing in the blood of Christ (cf. *Inst.* IV. xvii. 14). The signs, however, are not serviceable because of any natural similitude they bear, but because they have been adapted by God's Word for this special sacramental use, and because they are attached to God's promise. From this it follows that the outward signs or symbols do not deserve any reverence, and that the power and truth of the sacraments do not depend on the condition of those who receive them.

(*b*) By the *matter* or *substance* of the sacraments Calvin means not what Roman terminology means by "matter," but Christ Himself "clothed with His Gospel," "Christ with all His blessings." The real substance of the sacraments is to be found in the person of Christ Himself, in union and communion with Him, but this is not to be thought of simply as a spiritual union, or a communion in the Spirit. "I am not satisfied with the view of those who, while acknowledging that we have some kind of communion with Christ, only make us partakers of the Spirit, omitting all mention of flesh and blood. As if it were said to no purpose at all, that His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed; that we have no life unless we eat that flesh and drink that blood; and so forth" (*ib.* IV. xvii. 7). Calvin confesses, however, that this is a mystery which far transcends our understanding and powers of description. What he does insist on is that through the Word and sacraments we are given to share in Christ's humanity, so that all the power and strength which reside in Him are transmitted to us. In Baptism this means that we are initiated

and incorporated into Christ, as "members of His Body, of His flesh and of His bones." In Calvin's teaching there is, therefore, no place for the *opus operatum*; instead we have the person and work of Christ alone.

(c) By the virtue or *effect* of the sacraments Calvin means on the one hand the saving benefits of Christ—redemption, justification, sanctification, and eternal life—but on the other hand he refers to the act of the Holy Spirit, through whose power we are united to Christ, so as to partake of these blessings. By the power of the Spirit that which the sacraments promise, and that which resides in the humanity of Christ, who died and rose again on our behalf, is communicated to us "by a wondrous and incomprehensible operation" (C.R. XVI. 667). Thus the sacraments duly perform their office only when accompanied by the Spirit.

By insisting upon the act of the Spirit as the power of the sacraments, Calvin wants to make clear that the sacraments really effect what they promise, and are not lying symbols, and to make no less clear that the relation between the blessings of Christ, in salvation and redemption, and the sacramental operation is incomprehensible and miraculous. It is the act of the Spirit in His sovereignty and freedom, who uses the elements as He will, and is not bound to them.

(iii) *Summary.*

For the mediævalists a sacrament is thought of in terms of cause and effect. The effect must correspond exactly to the cause, and so a sacrament can signify only as much as it causes at the time of its operation. Therefore each sacrament signifies only a special grace in accordance with its particular cause, and so a series of sacraments is required for signifying and conferring the fullness of saving grace. This whole conception of causing grace and conferring it by degrees is entirely repudiated by Calvin.

In contrast, his view can be stated thus: The sacraments are instituted by God to signify the whole Christ with all His blessings. They therefore promise and bestow far more than is effected at the time of sacramental operation. They bring the participant into a fullness of grace in which he receives and enjoys more and more what has already been offered to him in Christ, so that the reality which will in the end be fulfilled is one that is already given in the beginning. The mode of signification is one in which Christ adapts Himself to us and our weakness, and through physical and sensible instruments raises us up to real and effective union and communion with Himself. The mode of operation is the sovereign and miraculous act of the Holy Spirit, who acts creatively upon us through Word and sacrament, giving us in soul and body to participate in Christ and all His blessings, and to share in the communion of the Holy Trinity.

(b) Calvin's Teaching on Baptism.

Baptism is the sacrament of the Covenant of Grace in which God in His paternal kindness takes us for His children and allies Himself with us as our God and Saviour. It is therefore the sacrament of admission or incorporation into God's people and Church. This is the doctrine of Baptism found in all the classical confessions and catechisms of the Reformed Churches.

For the most part Calvin interprets the conception of the Covenant in terms of Christ and of the Church which is His Body. It is a Trinitarian Covenant in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; but because the Covenant is renewed and established as the New Covenant in the Body and Blood of Christ, Baptism as the sacrament of initiation

into this Covenant is expounded as the sacrament through which we are incorporated into Christ. Because Christ is the Head and Centre of a new humanity which is taken up into the Covenant and constituted His Body, to be baptized into Christ is to be baptized into membership of His Body which is the Church. With Calvin it is not a *forensic relation* which is uppermost, but *personal union* with Christ—a living and growing relationship with Him, which God the Father begets in us through the Son and which He nourishes and sustains by His Spirit.

(i) *Baptism and Circumcision.*

With the fulfilment of the Covenant in Christ, and the consequent change in the form from the Old Covenant to the New, the sacramental signs of the Covenant changed, but the content of the one Covenant and therefore the content of the signs remained the same. Calvin saw the foundation of the Covenant in the will of God expressed in the words: "I will be your God, and you shall be My people." It was a Covenant testifying to God's "paternal kindness" and His desire to adopt men into the Household and Family of God. In circumcision God "inscribed His covenant in the flesh of Abraham. For circumcision was a solemn memorial of that adoption by which the family of Abraham had been elected to be the peculiar people of God" (*Comm. on Gen.* xvii. 9). This Covenant had two parts: "a declaration of gratuitous love to which was annexed the promise of a blessed life," and "an exhortation to the sincere endeavour to cultivate righteousness" (*Comm. on Gen.* xvii. 2). This Covenant is rightly kept "when the Word precedes, and we embrace the sign as a testimony and pledge of grace; for as God binds Himself to keep the promise given to us, so the consent of faith and of obedience is demanded of us" (*Comm. on Gen.* xvii. 9).

Calvin held that Christ was Himself the promise given in the sacrament of circumcision, and that with it the Old Testament Church received the sign and seal of forgiveness and regeneration and sanctification. The content and substance of the sacrament of circumcision was, therefore, the same as the content and substance of the sacrament of Baptism. But here Calvin stresses even more that the sacrament is concerned with admission to God's Fatherly favour, and so his definitions of Baptism are: "Baptism is a kind of entrance into the Church; for we have in it a testimony that we who are otherwise strangers and aliens, are received into the Family of God, so as to be accounted of His Household" (*Catechism*, C.T.S. II., p. 86). "Baptism is the initiatory sign by which we are admitted to the fellowship of the Church, that being ingrafted into Christ we may be accounted the children of God" (*Inst.* IV. xv. 1).

Here again we note that the Covenant, and therefore its sacrament, has two sides: "the principal thing" is what God does, and therefore Baptism has to be received "as from the hand of God" (*Inst.* IV. xv. 1f., 15f.); the secondary thing is what man does but this is essentially "passive" (*ib.* IV. xiv. 26; *Comm. on Gal.* v. 3). Thus, "in Baptism we have the Covenant of God as it were engraved in our bodies, for in it God declares that He wants to take us for His people and His heritage" (*Serm. on Deut.* x. 1-8). Man's part is passive as far as the reception of the sacrament is concerned, but it requires a life of obedience in faith and love. "The right use of Baptism consists in faith and repentance. . . . It is not necessary that faith and repentance should always precede Baptism. They are required only from those whose age makes them capable of both (*Gen. Cat.*, C.T.S. II., p. 87).

Calvin thinks it important to insist upon the fact that "there has always been but one adoption; there has always been but one Saviour;

there has always been but one grace which God promised to the ancients and to us" (*Serm. on 1 Cor.* x. 1-5). To the believer of the Old Testament, however, Christ was given only in promise, so that though they "partook of Christ" they could only be said to possess Him "as one hidden and as it were absent -absent, I say, not in the power of grace, but because He was not yet manifest in the flesh" (*Comm. on 1 Pet.* i. 12).

In the nature of the case the sign of circumcision which promised a Messianic Seed, a Saviour yet to come, could not be retained after Christ's Advent without denial that what it prefigured was already accomplished; but if circumcision was abrogated, it was so abrogated as to establish its truth, and to make way for another sign which would figure and promise the reality now completely fulfilled in the Body of Christ (*Comm. on Col.* ii. 11f., cf. *Comm. on Gen.* xvii. 13).

When Baptism succeeded to the sign of circumcision, all that was promised by circumcision to the Old Testament Church continued to be promised to the New Testament Church. Indeed far from offering less than circumcision, Baptism offers "more abundant grace," and offers it with "more excellent power" (*Gen. Cat.*, C.T.S., II, p. 88; *Inst.* IV. xiv. 26), and therefore applies in this abundance to infants as well as to adults, and to Gentiles as well as to descendants of Abraham. Baptism is now the sacrament of the Covenant of grace or of salvation "fulfilled in all its parts." It is not only the sacrament of the *promise* that God will be our God and Father, and the God and Father of our children; it is also the sacrament of *obedience* to the God of the Covenant, completely fulfilled in the whole course of Christ's obedience offered to God on our behalf. In Christ the Covenant is fulfilled from both sides: from the side of God and from the side of man. It is of that fulfilled Covenant in Christ that Baptism is now the sacramental sign and seal. Christ is Himself, therefore, the "proper object of Baptism," for in Him all parts of our salvation have been fulfilled, and in Him all the promises of God are Yea and Amen (*Inst.* IV. xv. 6; II. ix. 2f.). This sacrament is extended to us not on the ground that God has fulfilled His part of the Covenant and that now we have to fulfil our part, but because the Covenant has already been fulfilled completely on our behalf in Christ. Because of what Christ has done for us, God in this sacrament is pleased to look upon us not as we are in ourselves, and not on the ground of what we do, but in the Name of Christ alone. This is why we must learn "to take refuge in our Baptism." "It is not as though I come to Him in my own person. I renounce myself and my nature in which only shame and confusion are to be found, but I come to Him in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is even the case that He comes before me; He gives me as it were His own garment; He speaks for me, and it is in His Name that I present myself, just as though I were He Himself, since it has pleased Him to be so gracious as to unite me to Himself" (*Serm. on Gal.* iii. 26-29).

Behind this doctrine of Baptism as the sacrament of the Covenant fulfilled in Christ, and therefore taking the place of circumcision, lies Calvin's characteristic emphasis in the doctrine of the Atonement upon Christ as the Servant-Son. "Christ justifies us not only in that He is God, but also in that He is man; for He acquired righteousness for us in His flesh. For Isaiah does not say 'the Son,' but 'my Servant,' that we may not only regard Him as God, but may also grasp His human nature, in which He discharged that obedience by which we are acquitted before God" (*Comm. on Is.* liii. 11). Christ is not only the Servant of the Lord, He is also our Servant in that He fulfilled our part in obedience to the Father. In this sense He is spoken of as "the minister of circumcision" (Rom. 15 : 8; *Serm. on Is.* lii. 13–liii. 1). Because He took upon Him our nature, and in it wrought out our obedience in righteousness before God,

all that He did and was is common to Him and to us, and therefore He gives us to share in His relation to the Father, and so " He who bears the word in our name before the Father," praying to the Father for us (Lu. 23 : 34 ; and Jn. 17 : 12-20), " puts His Word into our mouth, teaching us through Him to call ourselves children of God, and so to pray ' Our Father, which art in heaven ' " (*Serm. on Is.* liii. 12). That is exactly the content of the sacrament of Baptism through which we are entitled in the name of Christ to have God for our Father, for by the same sacrament God has declared that He will be our Father for Christ's sake. It is the sacrament of the Fatherhood of God on the ground of the obedience of the Servant-Son ; it is therefore the sacrament of the obedience of Christ in which He gives us to share ; it is the sacrament of the Spirit of Adoption by whom we cry " Abba, Father."

(ii) *The One Baptism.*

Baptism was constituted as a sacrament of our sharing in the obedient Sonship of Christ by His act in condescending to have fellowship with us even in the *sign* " when He consecrated Baptism in His own Body " (*Comm. on Matt.* iii. 11). Calvin expounds the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan as His " initiation into His office, and endowment with the Holy Spirit " for the tasks which He had to fulfil " in the character of a servant " (*Comm. on Matt.* xi. 14, 16). But at the same time there was a design for our sakes : " Christ received the same Baptism with us, in order to assure believers that they are ingrafted into His Body, and that they are ' buried with Him in Baptism ' that they may rise to ' newness of life ' (Rom. iv. 4). But the end which He proposes in His Baptism is more extensive ; for thus it became Him to fulfil all righteousness (Matt. iii. 15). . . . The general reason why Christ received Baptism was that He might render full obedience to the Father ; and the special reason was that He might consecrate Baptism in His own Body, that we might have it in common with Him " (*Comm. on Matt.* iii. 13).

(1) Baptism was the act whereby Christ was solemnly introduced into His mission as the Suffering Servant. It is because He undertook the work of Atonement that He is the real author of Baptism, for it is He who baptizes with the Spirit and who cleanses us in His Blood (*Comm. on Matt.* iii. 11). Therefore, " whoever it is that baptizes, Christ alone presides " (*Inst.* IV. xv. 8). Every celebration of Baptism within the Church is related to the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan. It was there that the sacramental rite was consecrated for use in the Church, though it was given its content and truth in the whole course of Christ's obedience and in His death and resurrection ; while it was after His resurrection that the Church was authorised to baptize by the command and promise of Christ. (2) It follows from this that in our reception of Baptism we are given to share in Christ's obedience, in our human nature, which was anointed at the Jordan, not for His sake, but for our sake. Calvin admits, however, that Christ as man was given at His Baptism " additional certainty as to His heavenly calling " (*Comm. on Matt.* iii. 16). The main point that Calvin stresses, however, is the other one : " He consecrated and sanctified Baptism in His own Body that He might have it in common with us as the firmest bond of union and fellowship which He condescended to form with us ; and hence Paul proves us to be the sons of God, from the fact that we put on Christ in Baptism (Gal. iii. 27). Thus we see the complement of our Baptism in Christ, whom for this reason we call the proper object of Baptism " (*Inst.* IV. xv. 6).

(3) This also carries with it the essentially corporate nature of Baptism

as " common to Christ and His Church." This corporate nature of Baptism derives from the fact that " the whole Church " is already washed and baptized in Christ (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 22 ; IV. xv. 2 ; *Comm. on Eph.* v. 26). " For Calvin each individual Christian's Baptism is merely the sharing of one common Baptism, which the whole Church shares in common with Christ, Himself baptized in the Jordan, a common Baptism in which the whole Church is made one body and soul in union with Christ " (R. S. Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 175).

" One Baptism " does not mean that Christian Baptism is not to be ministered more than once, but that one Baptism is common to all, so that by means of it we begin to form one body and soul. It is on the ground of this one Baptism that Baptism is applied to individuals. " We all have the same Baptism whereby we are ingrafted into the common Body of Christ ; yet His Baptism is conferred on every individual that they may surely acknowledge that they are partakers in the adoption, and therefore members of the Church " (*Comm. on Exod.* xii. 11).

When looked at from the side of Christ Himself, Baptism is once and for all carried out sacramentally at the Jordan and in reality in His obedience unto death on the Cross (*Comm. on Matt.* iii. 11), but looked at from the side of the believer, Baptism is the sacrament of incorporation or adoption into the Christ and the One Body. There are, however, distinct degrees of adoption according to Calvin (*Comm. on Gen.* xvii. 7). There is, for example, a twofold adoption corresponding to the sacramental offer of Christ to all who receive it, and to that effectual calling which God inwardly seals with His Spirit. While circumcision and Baptism are " signs and seals of the Covenant," and " badges of the Church " marking it out in the world, and while through them eternal salvation is offered to all who receive them, not all use them with faith and repentance, and those who fail by their unbelief draw a distinction between themselves and the faithful. God on His part remains faithful to His covenant sealed to them in the sacraments, and so long as they live does not cast them out of His Church or cut them off from the hope of the Covenant, but if they persist in their unbelief they will be cut off in the judgment. The sacrament of Baptism is not, therefore, a sacrament of faith, or conversion, or of " regeneration " in that sense, but is a sacrament of the Gospel effectively offered to believers and their children.

In his *Commentary on Romans* Calvin speaks more precisely of a " threefold form of grafting and a twofold form of cutting off." " The children of the faithful are grafted in, to whom the promise is due by the Covenant with their fathers ; secondly, they are also grafted in who conceive the seed of the Gospel in them but which either takes no root or is choked before it bears fruit ; thirdly, the elect are grafted in, that is those who are illuminated by the immutable purpose of God unto eternal life. The first sort are cut off when they refuse the promise given to their fathers, or else do not receive it through their unthankfulness : the second when the seed of the Gospel withers, and is corrupted in them " (*op. cit.* on xi. 22f.). The whole Church is baptized in Christ, because He identified Himself with it, taking it up into the Covenant with Him, and consecrating it in Himself, that all within the Church might be members of His Body, or branches of the True Vine. Those who do not abide in Him are cut off and cast out (John 15 : 6 ; and Calvin *ad loc.*). Baptism is the sacrament of initiation into the sphere of common life in the Body of Christ. We cannot have the Gospel effectively presented to us except in that sphere, but even within that sphere men may harden their hearts in unbelief and reject the grace of God in Baptism.

(iii) *Baptism and the Trinity.*

Calvin describes the content of Baptism in three parts : as the threefold act of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. " In Baptism the *first* thing to be considered is that God the Father, by planting us in His Church in unmerited goodness, receives us by adoption into the number of His sons. *Secondly*, as we cannot have any connexion with Him except by means of reconciliation, we have need of Christ to restore us to the Father's favour by His blood. *Thirdly*, as we are by Baptism consecrated to God, we need also the interposition of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to make us new creatures. Nay further, our being washed in the blood of Christ is peculiarly His work ; but as we do not obtain the mercy of the Father, or the grace of the Spirit, otherwise than through Christ alone, it is on good grounds that we speak of Him as the peculiar end in view in Baptism, and more particularly inscribe His name upon Baptism. At the same time this does not by any means exclude the name of the Father and of the Spirit ; for when we wish to sum up in short compass the efficacy of Baptism, we make mention of Christ alone ; but when we are disposed to speak with greater minuteness, the name of the Father and that of the Spirit require to be expressly introduced " (*Comm. on 1 Cor.* i. 13 ; cf. also *Comm. on Matt.* xxviii. 19, and *Acts* ii. 38).

(1) The sacrament of Baptism testifies to what God has done for us. This is " the principal thing in Baptism " which it contributes to our faith, namely God's promise. " He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved " (Mk. 16 : 16). According to Calvin this does not mean that we are to be baptized on the ground of our faith, but the very reverse : faith and Baptism alike are grounded upon the promise of God alone. Nevertheless, because a promise is offered to us in Baptism, it is to be embraced in faith, and apart from faith we gain nothing from it (*Inst.* IV. xv. 15, 17). Here we are concerned primarily with God's action, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for it is in His Name, and not in our own name, that we are baptized.

(*a*) In Baptism we begin with " the unmerited mercy of the Father " (*Comm. on Matt.* xxviii. 19). It is the sacrament in which God sets His favour upon man and constitutes him a subject entitled to His love, marking him out as an heir of the Covenant, called to life in the freedom and responsibility of a child of the heavenly Father. The main stress that Calvin finds in this " Fatherly adoption " is that God promises that He will not impute to us our sins, and will regard us as forgiven and justified in His sight as members of His household, the Church (*Inst.* IV. xv. 1f.). The activity of the baptized is not that of co-operation in his salvation, but of thankfulness and witness, of growth in obedience and service to God. Baptism is the outward mark and earnest of the election or adoption which He has appointed to take place within the community of the Covenant —that is, His Church (*Serm. on 2 Tim.* ii. 19).

This is what Calvin calls " the signification " or " the thing signified " in Baptism, which is not just a sign with a meaning, but the sign with which God actually seals us as His own, so that to the Word of the Gospel announcing our ablution and sanctification, God adds Baptism in order to seal it, and to seal it on our bodies. The signing and sealing is the act whereby God designates and appropriates us as His children. It is *the* act in Baptism. If the *matter* of our cleansing and regeneration is in the Son, and the *effect* is in the Spirit, " the *cause* is in the Father " (*Inst.* IV. xv. 6). For Calvin this is the comprehensive fact about Baptism which signifies and promises the *whole* of our salvation. It does not therefore have to do only with the past, for that would mean that for the present and future we should need other remedies of expiation, since Baptism would have become absolete (*ib.* IV. xv. 3). On the contrary, " we ought

to consider that at whatever time we are baptized, we are washed and purified once for the whole of our life. . . . For though when once administered it seems to have passed, it is not abolished by subsequent sins. For the purity of Christ was therein offered to us, always is in force, and is not destroyed by any stain : it wipes and washes away all our defilements " (*ib.* IV. xv. 3).

(*b*) In the second place Baptism is to be regarded as the sacrament of reconciliation to the Father through the Son. In the fulfilment of His Covenant God has provided a Mediator in Jesus Christ who, by the sacrifice of His death, restores us to favour with God. This is what Calvin calls the *matter* of Baptism, or its *substance*. It is found exclusively in Christ. Thus while Baptism in the name of the Father means that He does not impute our sins to us, for His mercy's sake, this is actualized through the Blood of Christ, by which we are protected and covered. " Christ is the foundation of Baptism." The promise of the paternal favour of God, of forgiveness of sins and eternal life, and the fact of regeneration, depend for their completion on that foundation (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 3f.). But when Calvin speaks of Christ as the *matter* or *substance* of Baptism, he means that the content of the sacrament is to be found not in our experience but in Christ Himself, and above all in His death and resurrection, in which we are given to share. The Pauline expression, to " put on Christ " summarizes all that is to be said here. It is Christ, and all He was and is, in His human nature, Christ with His obedience, with His birth and sanctified human life, with His death and resurrection, that we put on in Baptism. To be baptized into the name of Christ means that the whole force and effect and virtue are contained in Christ, so that believers have to " live out of themselves—that is, live in Christ " (*Comm. on Gal.* ii. 20).

The blessings of Baptism into Christ include liberation from the powers of darkness, death to our old nature which is incapable of entering into God's Kingdom, and renewal through the power of Christ's resurrection. It is through death that we are in fact grafted into Christ, and begin a new life in which we grow up together with Christ. Baptism represents the beginning of new spiritual life which has to be nurtured and fostered all through our life until it is completed in heaven.

(*c*) In the third place, Baptism is to be regarded as the " washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit " (Tit. 3 : 5 ; *Inst.* IV. xv. 5f.). If Christ is the *matter* of Baptism the Spirit can be said to be its *effect*, for through Him our washing in the blood of Christ becomes effectual, and through Him we obtain regeneration by the death and resurrection of Christ, for through Him we are inserted into Christ and are made to grow together with Him (*Inst.* IV. xv. 6 ; *Comm. on Matt.* xxviii. 19 ; *Acts* ii. 38 ; viii. 16, &c.). Moreover it is through the act of the Spirit that in the sacrament the sign is effectively joined to the thing signified, so that what God represents to us in the sacrament He actually performs. Therefore " we are not baptized in water by men in vain, because Christ who commanded the same to be done, will fulfil His office and baptize us with the Spirit " (*Comm. on Acts* i. 5). In this connexion it is worth noting that Calvin usually speaks of the work of the Spirit where Roman theologians would speak of " grace," though he does sometimes use the unbiblical expression " the grace of the Spirit."

Calvin is actuely aware that though Baptism is to be spoken of in terms of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we cannot in any way divide Baptism into three operations : it is one Baptism by the One Lord, the One Spirit, and the One God and Father of all. " God cannot be truly known unless our faith distinctly conceive Three Persons in One Essence. Thus the fruit and efficacy of Baptism proceed from God the Father adopting us through His Son, and, after having cleansed us from the pollutions of the

flesh through the Spirit, creating us anew to righteousness" (*Comm. on Matt.* xxviii. 19).

(2) *The act of God in Baptism is to be accompanied or followed by a corresponding act of man attesting his faith.*—"It is the mark by which we openly declare that we wish to be ranked among the people of God, by which we testify that we concur with all Christians in the worship of one God and in one religion; by which in short we publicly assert our faith . . . to the praise of God" (*Inst.* IV. xv. 13). As Calvin draws out the significance of this, he makes several important observations :—

(*a*) The sacrament of Baptism is designed to raise up, nourish, and confirm our faith, but it is the part of faith to receive the sacrament "as from the hands of its Author." The precise significance of Baptism lies in the fact that, although faith is required, faith understands that in giving us the sacrament God is testifying to us that it is by His unmerited grace and not by our faith that we are saved. We can say that we are saved by faith only if "faith" means that we are relying, not on *our* acceptance of God, but upon His gracious act represented and extended to us in Baptism.

(*b*) Baptism must be used by faith and repentance. "We must first hold with a firm, heart-felt reliance, that, being purified from all stains by the blood of Christ, we are pleasing to God; secondly, we must feel His Spirit dwelling in us, and declare this to others by our actions, and we must constantly exercise ourselves in aiming at the mortification of our flesh, and obedience to the righteousness of God. . . . It is not necessary that faith and repentance should always precede Baptism. They are only required from those whose age makes them capable of both. It will be sufficient if, after they are grown up, they exhibit the power of their Baptism" (C.T.S., Tr. II., 87f.). There is in Calvin's teaching no minimising of the part of faith. It is required of all except those who die in infancy. No one can be saved if he refuses to believe. On the other hand, Baptism is not absolutely necessary. A believer may be saved even if he has been unable to obey the command to be baptized (C.T.S., Tr. III., 345ff.). Nevertheless Baptism has been commanded by the Lord, and "it is to be acknowledged as necessary"; but it has "no other necessity than that of an instrumental cause, to which the power of God is by no means tied down. Every pious person must shudder with his whole heart at the idea that the sacraments are superfluous" (*ib.* 174, 180).

(*c*) Baptism should be celebrated in the midst of the faithful, not only that the person to be baptized should be commended and presented to God while the whole Church looks on in witness and engages in prayer, but in order that he may confess his faith before men, testify to his entry into the Church of God, and that with one consent he may live in concord with all believers (*Inst.* IV. xv. 13, 15, 19). Baptism is essentially the sacrament of what Christ has done for the Church, and must be celebrated as a corporate sacrament in the midst of the Church.

(*d*) Because Baptism is of God and not of man, it does not lose its efficacy through the unworthiness or unbelief of man. "The promise can lie neglected but still it remains fixed and true. Although all men were false and perfidious, yet God does not cease to be true (Rom. 3 : 3, 4); though all were lost, Christ remains safe" (*Inst.* IV. xv. 17).

(*e*) In regard to the administration of Baptism, Calvin holds that "whether the person baptized is to be wholly immersed, and that whether once or thrice, or whether he is only to be sprinkled with

water, is not of the least consequence : Churches should be at liberty to adopt either according to the diversity of climates " (*Inst.* IV. xv. 19). He does insist, however, that Baptism must be administered only by those to whom is committed the ministerial office. " Christ appointed the same persons to be preachers of the Gospel and dispensers of Baptism " (*ib.* IV. xv. 22). The preaching of the Gospel and the administration of Baptism can no more be separated than a person can intrude himself into the ministry unlawfully. To divorce Baptism from the preaching of the Gospel is to take away the soul from the sacrament (C.T.S., Tr. III., 177, 352ff.). The unworthiness of the administrator, however, does not detract from Baptism, even when the administration in the Church is " partly defective." " Just as among men, when a letter has been sent, if the hand and the seal are recognized, it is not of the least consequence who the messenger was ; so it ought to be sufficient for us to recognise the hand and seal of our Lord in His sacraments " (*Inst.* IV. xv. 16).

(*c*) The Baptism of Infants.

When Calvin turns to give special consideration to the Baptism of infants he shows that " if we give proper consideration to the end for which Baptism was instituted, we perceive clearly that it is not less applicable to children than to those of more advanced years, and that they cannot be deprived of it without manifest fraud to the will of its divine Author " (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 8). As Calvin sees it, Infant Baptism follows rightly and properly from the Biblical teaching he has given. If there were no Biblical grounds for Infant Baptism, it should be abandoned, for " a sacrament has not a thread to hang on if it does not rest on the certain foundation of the Word of God " (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 1).

To understand the proper nature of Baptism, however, we must turn our eyes away altogether from the outward ceremony and raise them up to the promise and spiritual mysteries which they are appointed to signify. This directs us at once to God's Covenant of Grace and His *promise* of paternal favour to His children within it. The covenanted Fatherhood of God is thus the major premiss of Calvin's doctrine of Infant Baptism.

(i) *Circumcision and Infant Baptism.*

The analogy between Baptism and circumcision is demanded by the Biblical doctrine of the one Covenant of Grace. The outward form of the Covenant, as we have seen, its economy or administration, changes with the inauguration of the New Covenant in Christ, but the essential promise and substance of the Old and New Covenants remain the same. Baptism therefore differs from circumcision, but it has also " a very complete likeness " in " the internal office, the promise, the use, and the effect " (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 16). " The promise, in which . . . the power of the signs consists, is one in both—viz., the promise of the paternal favour of God, of the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life " (*ib.* IV. xvi. 4). Calvin shows that the promises which circumcision sealed to Abraham were *spiritual promises*, and Christ came to fulfil the promises made to the seed of Abraham, not allegorically but literally (*ib.* IV. xvi. 15), for He was *the Seed* of Abraham, and in Him circumcision is fulfilled for all who are baptized in Him. " Just as circumcision, which was a kind of mark to the Jews, assuring them that they were adopted as the people and family of God, was their first entrance into the Church, while they in their turn professed their allegiance to God, so now we are initiated by Baptism, so as to be enrolled among His people, and at the same time to swear unto

His name. Hence it is incontrovertible that Baptism has been substituted for circumcision, and performs the same office " (*ib.* IV. xvi. 4).

Under the old form of the Covenant circumcision was applied to children as well as to adults, even though it was a sacrament of penitence and faith. Abraham was given the seal after his faith in the promise of the Covenant : in Isaac's case it preceded intelligence (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 20, 24), yet he was sealed with the promise, and it was not in vain. Calvin applies the same reasoning to Infant Baptism. If the Covenant remains firm and fixed, it is no less applicable to the children of Christians in the present day than to the Jews under the Old Testament (*ib.* IV. xvi. 5). Moreover, because the sign of the Covenant is subservient to the Word of promise in the Covenant, and because the Word is destined for infants, why should they be denied the sign ? If they obtain the thing signified, they cannot be refused the sign. It is impossible to say that God is less liberal with His promise of grace in the New Testament than He was in the Old, for that would be to say that Christ has curtailed and diminished the grace of the Father (*ib.* IV. xvi. 5, 6).

(ii) *Christ and Infant Baptism.*

Calvin now turns to the teaching of the New Testament where he finds ample substantiation for the Baptism of infants in the example and person of Christ Himself.

(1) *The Example of Christ.*—The main passages that Calvin adduces are Matt. 19 : 13 ; Mark 10 : 13f. ; and Luke 18 : 15f. His treatment of these is so valuable that he must be cited in full. In his *Commentary on the Harmony of the Gospels* he has this to say :—

" This narrative is highly useful, for it shows that Christ receives not only those who, moved by holy desire and faith, freely approach to Him, but those who are not yet of age to know how much they need His grace. Those *little children* have not yet any understanding to desire His blessing, but when they are presented to Him, He gently and kindly receives them, and dedicates them to the Father, by a solemn act of blessing.

" We must observe the intention of those who present the children ; for if there had not been a deep-rooted conviction in their minds, that the power of the Spirit was at His disposal, that He might pour it out on the people of God, it would have been unreasonable to present their children. There is no room, therefore, to doubt that they ask for them a participation in His grace ; and so, by way of amplification, Luke adds the particle *also*, as if he had said that, after they had experienced the various ways in which He assisted adults, they formed an expectation likewise in regard to *children*, that, if He *laid hands on them*, they would not leave Him without receiving some of the gifts of the Spirit. The *laying on of hands* was an ancient and well-known sign of *blessing*, and so there is no reason to wonder, if they desire that Christ, while employing that solemn ceremony, should pray for the *children*.

" *But the disciples rebuked them.* They reckon it unworthy of His character to receive *children*. And their error is not without plausibility, for what has the most high Prophet and Son of God to do with *infants* ? But here we learn that they who judge of Christ according to their carnal perception are unfair judges, for they constantly deprive Him of His peculiar excellencies, and, on the other hand, under the appearance of honour, they attribute to Him things quite contrary to His character. Therefore let us learn not to think of Him otherwise than as He Himself teaches, and not to attribute to Him a character different from what He has received from the Father.

"*Suffer little children.* Jesus declares that He wishes to receive *children*; and at length, *taking them in His arms*, He not only embraces, but *blesses* them by the *laying on of hands*, from which we gather that His grace is extended even to those who are of that age. And no wonder, for since the whole race of Adam is shut up under the sentence of death, all from the least unto the greatest must perish, except those who are rescued by the only Redeemer. To exclude from the grace of redemption those who are of that age would be too cruel; and therefore it is not without reason that we employ this passage against the Anabaptists. They refuse Baptism to *infants*, because infants are incapable of understanding the mystery that is denoted by it. We, on the other hand, maintain that, since Baptism is the pledge and figure of the forgiveness of sins, and likewise of adoption by God, it ought not to be denied to *infants*, whom God adopts and washes with the blood of His Son. Their objection, that repentance and newness of life are also denoted by it, is easily answered. *Infants* are renewed by the Spirit of God, according to the capacity of their age, till that power which was concealed in them grows by degrees, and becomes fully manifest at the proper time.

"Again when they argue that there is no other way in which we are reconciled to God, and become heirs of adoption, than by faith, we admit that this is true of adults, but this passage demonstrates that it is not true of *infants*. Certainly the *laying on of hands* was not a trifling or empty sign, and the prayers of Christ were not idly wasted in the air. But He could not present the infants solemnly to God without giving them purity. And for what did He pray for them, but that they might be received into the number of the children of God? Hence it follows that they were renewed by the Spirit to the hope of salvation. In short, by embracing them, He testified that they were reckoned by Christ among His flock. And if they were partakers of the spiritual gifts, which are represented by Baptism, it is unreasonable that they should be deprived of the outward sign. But it is presumption and sacrilege to drive far from the fold of Christ those whom He cherishes in His bosom, and to shut the door, and exclude as strangers those whom He does not wish to be *forbidden to come to Him.*"

In the *Institutes* (IV. xvi. 7), where Calvin discusses the same passage, he points out that although Christ did not baptize the infants, His Word "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven" is accompanied by an act, testifying to His good will, in which He embraces them and commends them to His Father with prayer and benediction. This is precisely the reality, or the thing signified, in Baptism. If this is what He does to our children, and gives them an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, "why should they be denied the sign by which access, as it were, is opened up to the Church, that being admitted to it they may be enrolled among the heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven?"

If it is argued that Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration, and that children cannot understand it, and therefore cannot be regenerated, Calvin points out that we take on a serious responsibility if we say that infants cannot be regenerated. Are we to regard them as "left in death"? If they are not in Christ, they must be doomed to perish. Even if we cannot understand *how* God can regenerate infants, this does not mean that He cannot do so. That John the Baptist was "sanctified from his mother's womb" is a proof of what He may do to others (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 17). We cannot prescribe to God how He can or cannot regenerate. "God takes His own methods of regenerating" (*ib.* IV. xvi. 31).

(2) *The Sanction of the Person of Christ.*—At this point Calvin turns to a characteristic doctrine that he expounds at various places, and which can be summed up in the words that Christ is the mirror of election and

adoption, or the mirror of grace (*Inst.* II. xiv. 5, 7). By this he means not merely that we are adopted by grace in Christ, but that we are adopted by the same grace through which Jesus in His human nature became Christ (*ib.* II. xvii. 1; III. xxii. 1; III. xxiv. 5). We are given to share in His human nature—to share in His birth, His sanctified human life, His obedience unto death, and in all the blessings of salvation which are stored up in Him (*ib.* III. xi. 9, &c.). This is the heart of Calvin's doctrine of atonement through the whole course of Christ's obedience, and it is the heart of his doctrine of the sacraments, for Christ Himself is the *substance* or *matter* of the sacraments, as we have seen.

Calvin now applies this to the Baptism of infants. In Baptism Christ "makes them partners with Himself," and pours His life into them. He gives them to share in His own human life and His obedience to the Father. "And indeed Christ was sanctified from His earliest infancy that He might sanctify His elect in Himself at any age without distinction. For as He, in order to wipe away the guilt of disobedience which had been committed in our flesh, assumed that very flesh that in it He might, on our account, and in our stead, perform a perfect obedience, so He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, that, completely pervaded with His holiness in the flesh which He had assumed, He might pour it into us. If in Christ we have a perfect pattern of all the graces which God bestows on all His children, in this instance we have a proof that the age of infancy is not incapable of receiving sanctification" (*ib.* IV. xvi. 18). If as part of His perfect obedience Christ became a human infant for our sakes, sanctifying our birth by His birth, our infancy by His infancy, our life by His life, then surely our children are to be included in His great act of self-sanctification for our sakes (*ib.* II. xvi. 10; III. xvii. 1ff.). The application of Baptism to infants is the sacramental sign of such a relationship between Christ and human infancy.

Infants are born into a sinful race, and their natures are sinful, but even in helpless infancy they are given to share in the self-sanctification of Christ. Infants are unable to make an adequate response to the Father, but Christ stands in for them, sharing with them His own sufficiency and adequacy until they are able to make their own response to God. Yet even then, in the true response of faith they rely not on their own obedience, but, "like little children," on the obedience Christ has made on their behalf.

(3) *Infant Baptism in the Teaching of the Apostles.*—The arguments Calvin derives from the Apostles to justify the Baptism of infants are variations of his major arguments already set forth, but his use of the texts is significant and helpful.

He makes much of Eph. 2 : 12ff. to show that the middle wall of partition has been broken down between Jews and Gentiles, so that Gentiles are now incorporated within the Covenants of promise through the blood of Christ, and that Jews and Gentiles alike have access by one Spirit to the Father (*Comm. ad loc.*; *Inst.* IV. xvi. 3, 17, &c.). It is on this ground that the promises of the Covenant are extended to the children of believers. Thus a clear declaration was made on the day of Pentecost by Peter: "The promise is to you and your children" (Acts 2 : 39), while in the next chapter "Peter calls them 'the children of the Covenant,' that is heirs" (*ib.* IV. xvi. 15). Calvin relates this to the promise of the Covenant in Gen. 17 : 7, "where God reckons the children with the fathers in the grace of adoption. This passage abundantly refutes the manifest error of the Anabaptists who will not have infants, which are children of the faithful, to be baptized, as if they were not members of the Church" (*Comm. on Acts* ii. 39).

Calvin devotes considerable attention also to 1 Cor. 7 : 14: Paul's

declaration that the children of even one believing parent are *holy*. Calvin takes this to be a proof that the Old Testament conception of " holy seed " is carried over into the New Testament, as indeed it should be, since the Covenant of grace is unalterable. He says : " This is a remarkable passage drawn from the depths of theology, for it teaches us that children of believers are set apart from others by a sort of exclusive privilege, so as to be reckoned holy in the Church." It is not by nature that they are holy, for by nature they are the children of wrath (Eph. 2 : 3), and are born in sin. " The special privilege to children of the faithful flows from the blessing of the Covenant, by the intervention of which the curse of nature is removed in such a way that those who were unholy by nature are consecrated to God by grace."

Support for the same view is to be found in the accounts given of baptized families, such as in Acts 15 : 32 (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 8). The Old Testament gave due honour to the carnal relationship as a means within the Covenant for the transmission of blessing from father to child, and this is not abrogated by Christ. Calvin admits that we must not put our trust in such family connexions, and recalls that we are warned severely by the prophets from doing so, nevertheless the Covenant promises of God are without repentance, and they receive richer fulfilment in Christ than ever before. This is true even of the " carnal relationship " as a means used by God for blessing the children of the faithful (*ib.* IV. xvi. 12-14).

Strong emphasis is here laid upon the corporate nature of Baptism in Christ, and the corporate nature of the Church as His Body, which has been discussed above. With reference to Eph. 5 : 26, Calvin says : " If by Baptism Christ intends to attest the ablution by which He cleanses His Church, it would seem not to be equitable to deny this attestation to infants, who are justly deemed part of the Church, seeing they are called heirs of the heavenly kingdom. For Paul comprehends the whole Church when he says that it was cleansed by the washing of water."

(iii) *Baptismal Regeneration of Infants ?*

When we come to ask what Calvin has to say about the question of so-called " baptismal regeneration," we find that he has no hesitation about speaking of Baptism as " the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit " (Titus 3 : 5 ; cf. *Inst.* IV. xv. 2, 5), nor about applying the same language to infants (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 20). But to speak of Baptism as a " sacrament of regeneration " is what Calvin calls " a sacramental mode of speaking " in which, not without good reason, the name of the thing signified is transferred to the sign. Titus 3 : 5 and 1 Peter 3 : 21 are instances of this. The " *sacramental mode of speaking* " is not just a metaphor. Certainly it is figurative, but it is used in order to declare that God Himself has joined the thing signified with the sign, and that He actually does what the sign represents (cf. *Inst.* IV. xiv. 7 ; IV. xv. 14). On the other hand Calvin insists, as we have already shown, that *Baptism is not the cause or the source of regeneration or salvation.* It is God alone who regenerates and saves, and He does not resign His power and authority to sacraments, for they are merely instruments in His hand, and cannot be separated from faith in Him. Thus the whole idea of *ex opere operato* regeneration in Baptism (commonly called " baptismal regeneration ") is utterly repudiated by Calvin.

Calvin's positive teaching about the application to infants of " the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit " may be summarized as follows :—

(1) The sacrament of regeneration means above all that in Baptism little children have sealed in their bodies the promise of

the Covenant, that God will be the Father of our children. Regeneration is adoption into the family and household of God. To be a child of the heavenly Father is the primary reality and fact of Infant Baptism. This is what Calvin calls "the grace of common adoption and regeneration which is offered to all the godly in Baptism" (*Comm. on Acts* viii. 16). Everthing else flows from the fulfilment of God's Covenant-promise sealed in Baptism.

(2) Children are not adopted on the ground of Baptism: Baptism is given on the ground of adoption. "The children of the godly are born the children of the Church, and they are accounted members of Christ from the womb" (*Comm. on Acts* viii. 37) and "of the household of the Kingdom of God" (*Comm. on Acts* xi. 47). Baptism does not cause salvation to be bestowed on the infants, but testifies to the salvation in the love of God extended to them in the Church (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 15f.). Calvin can also say "Infant Baptism rests on this ground that God recognizes those who are presented to Him by our ministry as already His own" (C.T.S., Tr. III., 348). Baptism is thus the sign and seal of the fact that already within the household of faith God has adopted an attitude toward our children long before they can adopt an attitude toward Him. When a child comes to believe, it will be the confirmation of the fact that he is already claimed and owned by the heavenly Father, that he has all along been living under God's blessing and promise. If he does not believe, then he resists the promise and rejects the grace of God, but he cannot divest himself of the fact that God has set the mark of His love upon him, and has gratuitously provided for him adoption unto salvation. It is because he has already been grasped by God that he has freedom to believe and ground on which to build his faith.

(3) Because by its very nature Baptism does not have its efficacy included in itself, but only in the Word or promise of God which it seals, the efficacy of Baptism is not impaired by unbelief. "So far as it relates to God, Baptism retains its power, for even when rejected, the grace of God is still offered through it" (*Comm. on Titus* iii. 5). Because Baptism is objectively grounded in the promise of God, its principal part, it is not necessary that faith should always precede Baptism, but faith is necessary if a person is to derive benefit from Baptism, unless, of course, he dies in infancy (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 21f.). Whether adults or infants are baptized, the promise and action of God always go before. All must receive Baptism passively—*i.e.*, as little children. Certainly if an adult is baptized he must profess his faith, and so in his case the sign follows his understanding of it; but Infant Baptism more clearly represents the principal fact of Baptism, that the promise of God precedes all faith, and that faith can only follow and depend on that prior promise. That is why it is so right and proper to baptize infants, because the principal thing in Baptism always precedes the sign. The secondary thing—faith—may follow or precede, but it is necessary if Baptism is to have its promised effect on the recipient. "He who separates faith from the sacraments acts as if he were to take the soul away from the body. . . ." In regard to the command of Christ to the disciples to "Go, preach, and baptize," it is quite clear, says Calvin, that they must preach before baptizing, and Baptism always follows upon the Word. Here, however, Christ is saying that "so far as the dispensation of Baptism is concerned, it is subordinate to the function of preaching." But to make a rule from this command in Matt. 28 : 19 or Mark 16 : 16 that only those

who first believe can be baptized, would be just as foolish as to make a rule that Baptism must always precede belief, because in the same command Jesus said "Baptize, teaching whatsoever I have commanded you" (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 27). Baptism is a sacrament added to the preaching of the Word as its God-given seal, and it has to be administered as such. But precisely because the Word of God promises that God will be a Father to our children, it would be quite wrong not to follow that Word with the sign of Baptism upon the bodies of our children (C.R., VII., 60f.; *Inst.* IV. xvi. 21ff.).

This does not mean that the faith of the others—the Church, the parents, the sponsors—stands in for the child who still lacks faith. Such a notion is a form of the Roman doctrine of "implicit faith," which Calvin rejects. A child is baptized unto faith and repentance (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 200). Its faith is "implicated in the Word of God," for it derives from the faithfulness of God, and depends upon the vicarious obedience of Christ, so that even when the convictions of faith develop in a child they operate by finding the whole substance of Baptism in Christ, and not in the believer (*Comm. on Acts* xv. 9; xvi. 32f.). Behind this implicit faith lies the fact that our Baptism is involved in Christ's Baptism, for "He received Baptism in His own flesh that He might couple Himself with us by that visible sign. Baptism is common to the Son of God and to us; we all have one Baptism" (*Comm. on Acts* xix. 5).

(4) We have seen that for children Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration, in the sense that it seals their adoption by the Father, who looks upon them in the person of His Son, for it is in Him that they are accounted sons of God. When does this regeneration come to be translated into the life and faith of children? To this question Calvin answers as follows. If a child dies before it attains faith, God regenerates it. He does, therefore, regenerate infants. We cannot say that He cannot, or does not, regenerate infants in Baptism, even though they are incapable of being taught or of understanding anything (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 19, 31). But does God in fact regenerate infants in Baptism? Calvin answers that with the sacrament there is sown "a seed of spiritual regeneration," but this seed is the Word of God. Spiritual regeneration is lodged in the Word alone, and though a child is baptized unto *future* faith and repentance, yet in Baptism the Word and the Spirit of God are deposited in him that they may bear fruit in due course (*ib.* IV. xvi. 19 f.; C.R., IX., 118; *Inst.* III. i. 2). "For those who were baptized when mere infants, God regenerates in childhood or adolescence, occasionally even in old age" (C.T.S., II., 218). Calvin does not say that a seed of eternal life is implanted in the child at Baptism. The seed of life is in the Word, or in the Spirit, or in Christ. "It is in the fact of having been baptized that the future potentiality lies, and not in the heart of the baptized person" (R. S. Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 190). Yet Calvin is inclined to say that infants "receive some part of that grace, of which they are to have the full measure shortly after" (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 19).

(5) It belongs to the very nature of the sacraments that in them God accommodates Himself to the feebleness and littleness of our capacity. This is true of the nature of the Word of God in Scripture, for, on account of the love He bears us, "God comes down to earth that He may raise us up to heaven. . . . He condescends to our ignorance and prattles to us, in Scripture" (*Comm. on John* iii. 13; 1 Cor. xiii. 12, &c.). But this is even more true of the sacraments in which God adapts Himself to our feeble

capacities of sense in order to convey Himself to us (*Inst.* II. x. 5f. ; IV. xiv. 3f., &c.). Through the same Word and sacrament God adapts or accommodates Himself to infants. He makes Himself little for their sake, and applies to their capacity whatever He testifies of Himself. And so Calvin concludes that " children are regenerated by the Spirit of God, *according to the measure and capacity of their age* " (*Comm. on Matt.* xix. 13 f). " Christ admits infants by Baptism to this end, that so soon as the capacity of their age shall suffer, they may addict themselves to be His disciples, that being baptized by the Holy Spirit, they may comprehend, with the understanding of faith, His power which Baptism prefigures " (*Comm. on Acts* viii. 57).

(6) It follows from this active accommodation of God in Word and sacrament to the growing capacities of the child, that, far from being confined to the moment of administration, the efficacy of Baptism extends throughout the whole life of the recipient, from infancy to death. Far from restricting the advantage of Baptism to the past, the believer must continually have recourse to it, continually gain profit from it, for " the great truth of our spiritual regeneration, though but once represented to us in Baptism, should remain fixed in our minds throughout our whole life " (*Comm. on Psalm* lxiii. 3).

(7) It is for this very reason that God has provided us with another sacrament. " As God, regenerating us in Baptism, ingrafts us into the fellowship of His Church, and makes us His by adoption, so He performs the office of a provident parent in continually supplying the food with which He may sustain and preserve us in the life to which He has begotten us by His Word " (*Inst.* IV. xvii. 1). That food Christ supplies to us in the Lord's Supper. It is in contrast and yet in relation to the second sacrament that we see the distinctive nature of Baptism, and see that it is specially appropriate to children. " If we attend to the peculiar nature of Baptism, it is a kind of entrance and, as it were, an initiation, into the Church, by which we are ranked among the people of God, a sign of our spiritual regeneration, by which we are born again to be children of God ; whereas, on the contrary, the Supper is intended for those of riper years, who having passed the tender period of infancy, are fit to bear solid food. This distinction is very clearly pointed out in Scripture. For there, as regards Baptism, the Lord makes no selection of age, whereas He does not admit all to partake of the Supper, but confines it to those who are fit to discern the body and blood of the Lord's death, and understand its power. . . . Nothing of the kind is prescribed in Baptism. Wherefore there is the greatest difference between the two signs " (*Inst.* IV. xvi. 30).

(8) The Roman rite of *Confirmation*, according to Calvin, is not a proper sacrament, for it has no authoritative Word of institution (*Inst.* IV. xix. 4ff.). In order to make it into a sacrament " the proper promises " have been severed from Baptism and transferred to it. Thus all believers were said to become " complete Christians " after Baptism by receiving the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands (*ib.* IV. xix, 8f.). This invention Calvin calls both an insult and an injury to Baptism (*ib.* IV. xix. 8, 13).

Calvin confesses that originally " laying on of hands " was " a sacrament " (*Comm. on Acts* xix. 7), but says that it was given specially to the Apostles for use in connexion with the miraculous manifestations of the Spirit to signalize the new Kingdom of Christ and the new preaching of the Gospel (*ib.* IV. xix. 6). It was not

meant to be continued as a sacrament. Imitation of this degenerated into superstition and this must be rejected. At the same time there was another ancient use of laying on of hands which was " done by way of benediction," and Calvin says he would like to see its use restored (*ib.* IV. xix. 4). This ancient use goes back to Apostolic times and is associated with Infant Baptism. Calvin's clearest account of this is given in his *Commentary on Hebrews* vi. 2 :—

" With Baptisms the Apostle connects the *laying on of hands*, for as there were two sorts of catechumens, so there were two rites. There were heathen who did not come to Baptism until they made a profession of their faith. In regard to these, catechising preceded Baptism. But the children of the faithful, as they were adopted from the womb, belonged to the Body of the Church by the right of promise, and were baptized in infancy ; but after the time of infancy, when they were instructed in the faith, they presented themselves as catechumens. In their case this took place after Baptism. But another symbol was then added : the laying on of hands.

" This one passage abundantly testifies that this rite had its beginning from the Apostles, which afterwards, however, was turned into superstition. They contrived the fiction that it is a sacrament by which the Spirit of regeneration is conferred—a dogma by which they have mutilated Baptism, for what was peculiar to it they transferred to the imposition of hands. Let us know then, that it was instituted by its first founders that it might be an appointed rite for prayer, as Augustine calls it. The profession of faith which youth made, having passed the time of childhood, they intended to confirm by this symbol, but they thought of nothing less than to destroy the efficacy of Baptism. Wherefore the pure institution at this day ought to be retained, but the superstition ought to be removed."

3. THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH.

It is more difficult to give an account of the doctrine of Baptism in the Church of England than in the Lutheran or Reformed Churches, because during its formative period the Church of England lacked an outstanding theologian such as Luther and Calvin, and because the *Articles of Religion* were not given the same authority as, for example, the *Confession of Augsburg* had in the Lutheran Church. The distinctive character of the Church of England and its doctrine comes rather from *The Book of Common Prayer* which is replete with doctrine and which sets forth the ancient Creeds of the Church in the context of worship. While this may appear unduly to exalt the place of liturgical form and order, the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*, in contrast to the mediæval and Roman service books, stands out as essentially a standard of evangelical doctrine and worship. This has to be kept clearly in mind in any account of the Anglican doctrine of the sacraments.

Two further observations need to be made about the Anglican Reformation. *First*, changes were introduced and carried out more gradually than in the Reformed Churches, in the hope that the whole people could be carried forward with their leaders, and in the conviction that as the preaching of the Gospel had its effect, it would be possible more and more to restore the face of the ancient Catholic Church, after its mediæval disfiguration. In this slower movement traditional terminology was sometimes

retained in an evangelical context, and with a more Biblical significance. However, after the movement was halted under Elizabeth, it was possible for later theologians to re-interpret the Articles and the Prayer Book in senses not intended by the Anglican Reformers. This is particularly evident in regard to the concept of regeneration in Baptism. *Second*, the Anglican Reformation began under strong Lutheran influence, but in its second and third phases it moved forward in line with Reformed theology. The Lutheran teaching was retained at distinct points, as in Article XXV* and Cranmer's *Catechism*, but on the whole doctrine was more and more influenced by the Reformed view of the sacraments through the teaching of Bucer and Martyr in England, and English churchmen returned from the Continent, as well as by the writings of Calvin himself. Many Anglican theologians have tried to depreciate the influence of Calvin upon the doctrinal formularies of the Church of England, but have not been able to help expounding them in language that comes almost directly from Calvin—*e.g.*, Harold Browne, *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*. In the careful and exact account of the doctrine of Baptism in the Anglican Reformers by G. W. Bromiley this indebtedness of Anglican to Reformed teaching is fully acknowledged, and thoroughly documented.

(*a*) Anglican Sacramental Teaching.

(i) *The Sacraments of the Gospel.*

The earlier documents, of 1536 and 1543, spoke of seven sacraments. Cranmer's *Catechism*, following the views of Luther at that time, mentions three: Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord's Supper. In the Articles of 1553 and later, however, Baptism and the Lord's Supper are accorded a unique place, and the notion of a hierarchy of sacraments is swept completely aside. "There are two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel—that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. Those five commonly called sacraments—that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction—are not to be counted for sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown up partly by the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly as states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of sacraments with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God" (Art. XXV).

This makes it quite clear that there are only two sacraments in the true and proper sense, though the word "sacrament" can be used in a wide sense to include other sacred ceremonies. In this sense the Elizabethan Homily "On Prayer and Sacraments" says that "the name of a sacrament may be attributed to anything whereby an holy thing is signified," and gives the feet-washing as an illustration of what is meant. Cranmer himself was quite blunt about it: "I find not in the Scripture the matter, nature, and effect of all those which we call the seven sacraments, but only of certain of them, as Baptism" (Bromiley, *op. cit.*, p. 4). That other rites were continued in practice marks out the Anglican Church from our own, but the important fact to notice is that there are only two sacraments ordained by Christ Himself as generally necessary to salvation (Cranmer's *Catechism*), and these are essentially "Sacraments of the Gospel." This indicates immediately the primary, evangelical nature of these sacraments—they serve the Gospel of Christ, and are to be understood within the whole change from the mediæval Roman notion of salvation to the teaching of the Anglican Reformers about the Gospel of justification and free grace, and of salvation through faith. This is the major premiss for all that

* The Articles are referred to according to their numbering in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

follows, so that the language used about the sacraments is intended to refer directly to the teaching of Scripture, and is to be read only in that light.

The Homily on Prayer and Sacraments defines sacraments as "the visible signs, expressly commanded in the New Testament, whereunto is annexed the promise of free forgiveness of our sins and of our holiness and joining in Christ," and goes on to show that two things are required for a true and proper sacrament: a promise and an express Word or Command from Christ. Only Baptism and the Lord's Supper come under this category. This is clearly in line with the teaching of the Continental Reformers, that the Word is the principal element. The *Catechism* defines a sacrament in traditional Augustinian terms as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us" and adds "ordained by Christ Himself, as the means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." The Article on the sacraments (XXV) takes over the formulation of the *Confession of Augsburg* (XIII): "Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him." Four things are to be noted here:—

(1) *They are "badges or tokens of Christian men's profession."*—Following the Lutheran order, the Anglican definition mentions the subjective aspect before the objective one. This Calvin always refused to do, lest people should be misled as to the principal part. Correspondingly the Anglican order lays much greater emphasis upon the formal profession of faith at Baptism, with its solemn renunciation of "the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world; with all the covetous desires of the same; the carnal desires of the flesh," followed by the profession of faith and express request for Baptism. And so the Article on Baptism XXVII) speaks of Baptism as "a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christian men are discerned from other that be not christened."

(2) "*They be certain sure witnesses . . . of grace and God's good will towards us.*"—In this statement it is made clear that Baptism witnesses to the objective fact of God's grace, and is not merely the sign of a subjective experience. In line with this the *Catechism* speaks of the sacraments as "pledges" of God's assurance, while the *Ministration of Public Baptism* recalls the promises of God throughout. Here we have the same stress as in the Continental Reformation upon the Covenant. This replaced the mediæval stress upon the New Law. Though the actual words cited derive from Lutheran sources, Anglican churchmen were able to put into them the stronger emphasis of Calvin upon God's Covenant mercies and promises, and so to teach that the reliability of the sacraments is not that of a cause regularly producing the same effect so long as it is unhindered from without, but rather that it is the faithfulness of Christ Himself, the Truth of God, who holds to His promises and will fulfil them.

(3) "*They are effectual signs of grace and God's good will towards us by the which He doth work invisibly in us.*"—Though the sacraments are not here explicitly called "instruments" as well as effectual signs, that is what is meant. The use of the typical Augustinian dualism is intended to repudiate the *ex opere operato* conception of sacramental efficacy. Even though explicit mention of the *ex opere operato* conception was deleted from the Article of 1563, the intention to repudiate the Roman view remains. The stress is laid upon the fact that efficacy depends on God's good will and upon His direct action. This is an essentially dynamic, and not a static, view of the operation of God's grace. This view of the sacraments

makes their effects less important than what they signify, and fits in with the stress upon profession of faith which is found throughout the order for Baptism.

(4) "*By the which He . . . doth not only quicken but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him.*"—The sacraments are designed to contribute to faith in Christ, both in rousing it and in confirming it. The sacraments, therefore, cannot be effective apart from the rise and the increased exercise of faith. This is made abundantly clear by the last paragraph in Article XXV. "The sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly (*rite*) use them. And in such only as worthily (*digne*) receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation as Saint Paul saith."

Clearly the sacraments have to be administered with due correctness, but at the same time they have to be received worthily by faith, if they are to be effective for salvation. Nevertheless the sacraments do not depend upon faith for their validity or their truth: they are efficacious for salvation only through faith, but their objectivity is evident from the fact that their misuse brings judgment.

The emphasis upon faith means that the sacraments do not operate automatically, but it is equally important to realise that they do not depend upon the merit of the recipient. They are sacraments of the Gospel of free forgiveness and grace. Therefore attention has to be directed away from the outward signs and ceremonies and focused upon the inward signification—the Gospel that is represented.

(ii) *Sacraments and Prayer.*

There can be no dubiety about the fact that the teaching of the Church of England given above is substantially the same as that of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches. The distinctive emphasis of the Anglican doctrine is only to be undersood in the context of the *Book of Common Prayer*, which is put into the hands of all its members, and which contains the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Catechism, and the orders of service for the sacraments.

This setting produces the distinctive Anglican imprint apparent from the first edition of the Prayer Book in 1549, and still characteristic of the standard edition of 1662—namely, that *sacraments are essentially acts of prayer*. Thus Homily XXI discusses the sacraments along with common prayer. In the sacraments the Church is given ordinances with which to appear before the face of God, in which God humbles Himself to come to us through lowly and visible elements, and in which we call upon Him in visible prayer of word and action. Even so the stress is upon petition and invocation. As Richard Hooker put it: "We all admire and honour the Holy Sacraments, not respecting so much the service which we do unto God in receiving them, as the dignity of that sacred and secret gift which we thereby receive from God" (*The Laws of Eccl. Pol.*, V. i. 2).

Two illustrations of this may be given:—

(1) *The kneeling reception at Communion.*—Though he subscribed emphatically to the doctrine that sacraments are acts of prayer, John Knox objected strongly to this on the ground that it had become a superstitious rite under the Papacy, and he was not alone in this, for the Anglican Article on the sacraments was designed to kill that superstition by declaring that the sacraments are not ordained "to be gazed upon or to be carried about." But when the Church of England came eventually to retain the practice of

kneeling at Communion, this was in line with its reformed teaching about the relation of the sacrament to prayer. The argument of Thomas Jackson in 1625 was typical. He supported the practice from the example Christ gave in the Garden of Gethsemane when He asked His disciples to watch and pray with Him in the hour of His passion (*Works*, VI., p. 492).

(2) *The primary place given to petitionary prayer in the sacrament of Baptism.*—Thus one of the prayers before Baptism is based upon the command and promise of Christ : " Ask and you shall have ; seek and you shall find ; knock and it shall be opened unto you." It is clear throughout the whole service that the efficacy of Baptism is regarded as derived from God's answer to prayer, and not from the work wrought—not from the mere fulfilment of a sacred institution.

(iii) *Sacraments and the Church.*

The setting of the sacraments in the context of prayer as something belonging to their essential nature is counterbalanced by another distinctive Anglican characteristic : the setting of the sacraments in traditional institutions. Because both the Church and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge remained in institutional continuity with the Middle Ages, and because of reaction against the views of extremists and independents, there was a growing tendency, both during and after the time of Elizabeth, to re-interpret the formularies in a more traditionalist sense. A marked impetus in this direction was given by the publication in 1604 of *The Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical*. With this the Anglican doctrine of the sacraments may be said to be given a turn similar to that which early mediæval teaching was given when Peter Lombard combined the neo-Augustinianism of Hugo with the legalism of Gratian and the canon lawyers. Thus because the sacraments in the Church of England are given a setting in Canon Law as well as the *Book of Common Prayer*, they become acts of valid and correct administration as well as acts of prayer (cf. Edward Reynolds, 1638).

The real problem presented by the Anglican doctrine of the sacraments is in the extent to which the Church as an ecclesiastical institution controls these mysteries. In seeking to find a balance between understanding the sacraments as signs and seals of the living Word of the Gospel, and understanding them as means of grace handled by the ecclesiastical institutions, Anglicans tended to slip back into scholastic categories. Hooker is an excellent example of this. He was a man of moderate views, a decided protestant, yet with a sympathetic appreciation of the teaching of Thomas Aquinas, and a definite liking for the view of the earlier Schoolmen. His outlook shows a number of significant changes from that of the Anglican Reformers.

(1) The sacraments are thought of above all as mediating grace, but not as causing or conferring grace *ex opere operato*. " The outward sign applied hath of itself no natural efficacy towards grace, neither doth God put into it any supernatural or inherent virtue. . . . With the outward sign God joineth His Holy Spirit, and so the whole instrument of God bringeth that to pass, whereunto the baser and meaner part could not extend. . . . The action thereof is one, God the author thereof, and man a co-operator by Him assigned to work for, with, and under Him. God the giver of grace by the outward ministry of men, so far as he authorized man to apply the sacraments of grace in the soul, which He alone worketh without either instrument or co-agent " (VI. vi. 11).

Grace is not in any way bound to the elements, for grace is that " which Christ originally is or hath for the general good of His Church." At the

same time Hooker combines this with an Augustinian and mediæval view of grace as the "thing" or "force" at work through the sacramental means, and as operating metaphysically, as it were, upon the being of the recipient (V. lviii. 1).

(2) It is not surprising that a more traditionalist terminology is adopted for the sacrament. Three things are now said "to make up the substance of a sacrament"—namely, "the grace which is thereby offered, the element which shadoweth or signifieth grace, and the word which expresseth what is done in the element." To each sacrament in addition to common grace there is given a "special grace peculiar to it," and different from "the sacramental grace" of any other sacrament. This grace is "the essential form." The elements are "the matter" to which the essential form is joined. The Word, however, has only a legal and explanatory function (V. lviii. 6).

(3) This conception of "the word" is specially significant. What the Reformers in England as well as on the Continent understood as the Word is here allowed to slip away almost altogether. For Hooker, "the Word" in the sacrament refers to "the words of express declaration taken from the mouth of our Lord Himself" which are added to the visible elements "that the one may teach what the other do most assuredly bring to pass" (V. lviii. 1). Here we have a separation between the Word, which has only a legal and intellectual function, and the operation, which is ascribed to the elements—the external accompaniment of secret grace. It is not surprising therefore to find that the lesson and the sermon and the prayers are regarded as "but things accessory" (V. lviii. 4).

(4) Thus the evangelical character of the sacraments tends to yield to a moral and legal emphasis. The sacraments are "moral instruments" of salvation which, unless we perform them as the Author of grace requires, are unprofitable. The use of these moral instruments is in our hands, the effect is in the hands of Christ. Their use, however, is governed by His "express commandment," and their effect is governed by "a conditional promise" (V. lvii. 4, 5). The requirement of an explicit commandment for a sacrament led Hooker, in line with the Anglican Reformers, to think of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as the only true sacraments in the full and proper sense, but he tended to lay undue stress upon juridical validity, and to let this take the place in the sacraments which rightly belongs to the preached Word of the Gospel.

Although canon law, ecclesiastical institutions, and traditional terminology occupy a more prominent place in the Church of England than in the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, this is at least balanced by the Prayer Book, which is full of Biblical and evangelical doctrine, and which continues to keep the Anglican Church within the tradition of the Reformation, as well as to maintain in it a rich heritage of prayer and devotion.

(*b*) The Anglican Doctrine of Baptism.

Both the Article XXVII. *Of Baptism* and *The Ministration of Public Baptism* were produced during the reign of Edward VI., when the chief authors were moving from a Lutheran to a more Reformed outlook. The first edition of *Public Baptism* came shortly after Cranmer had issued his "Lutheran" *Catechism* in 1548. In 1552 this book was revised, and has since had little alteration, while the Article dates from 1553 and remains the same except for a strengthening of its statement regarding Infant Baptism made in 1563. The doctrine of Baptism which these formularies contain has to be interpreted in accordance with the thinking of Cranmer and his associates, such as Ridley, who gave it their imprint. In our

exposition we shall follow generally the order given in Article XXVII, interpreting it in the light of the *Book of Common Prayer*, and with additional aid, mainly from Cranmer's *Catechism*.

(i) *Profession of Faith.*

The Article on Baptism, like that on the sacraments, begins with the subjective aspect : " Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christian men are discerned from other that be not christened, but is also a sign of regeneration. . . ." This was intended to repudiate all views of Baptism which make it only a bare sign of what God does for us, or only a sign of our profession of faith ; but there was also a more positive intention. The form for *Public Baptism* lays great stress upon the fact that " Baptism doth represent unto us our profession." In other words, Baptism has its proper place in the public congregation of the faithful, before the last canticle at Morning or Evening Prayer. The preamble says : " Baptism should not be ministered but upon Sundays and other Holy-days, when the most number of people come together ; as well for that the Congregation there present may testify the receiving of them that be newly baptized into the number of Christ's Church ; as also because in the Baptism of Infants every Man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his Baptism." Moreover the service ends with an admonition to the godparents that it is their part to see that the children baptized are taught " so soon as they shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, they have made by you." Then it is added that in fulfilment of that duty toward the children they are " to call upon them to hear sermons." This marks a very definite change, for instead of the mediæval isolation of Baptism, and its reduction to " the work wrought," Baptism is now restored to its proper place in the corporate worship of the faithful where the Word of the Gospel is heard. Moreover the elaborate order for the administration of public Baptism was deliberately designed to make it instructional in itself, so that in its very ministration the Gospel could be clearly heard, and believers be encouraged and confirmed in their faith.

(ii) *Sacrament of Membership in the Covenant.*

The word " Covenant " is not used either in the Article or in the order for public Baptism, but the language used by both Luther and Calvin to describe membership of the Covenant is used. That this was the intention of the authors is clear from their extant writings. A full exposition of this is given by Philpot who follows the arguments of Calvin very fully (Parker Soc., pp. 275ff.). John Hacket's comment in 1671 is representative : " Our Common Prayer Book (a store-house of rare divinity) tells us what is to be expected at that laver for them that come to be baptized : That God hath promised to be the Father of the faithful and of their seed, and will most surely perform and keep His promise with them ; and by this introduction we are incorporated into the Holy Congregation " (More and Cross, *Anglicanism*, p. 424).

Just as circumcision was a mark to distinguish between members of the Covenant people and Gentiles, so Baptism is the mark to distinguish members of Christ's holy Church and non-Christians (*Hom.* XXI). But it is more than that, for it signs and seals the promises of the Father to those received into membership of His Household and Kingdom. The ground of Baptism is " the good-will of our Heavenly Father toward these infants " declared in Christ. That this is in substantial identity with the teaching of the Continental Reformers is clear particularly from the Larger Catechism of Cranmer which makes the Word of God in institution, command, and promise the prime fact in Baptism. " We ought not to have

an eye only to the water, but to God rather, which did ordain the Baptism of water, and commanded it to be done in His name" (Cran., *Cat.*, p. 186).

In the *Book of Common Prayer* the promises are related directly to Christ: "Ye have heard also that our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in the Gospel to grant all these things that ye have prayed for: which promise, He for His part, will most surely keep and perform. Wherefore, after this promise made by Christ, these infants must also faithfully, for their part promise by you that be their sureties, that they will forsake the devil and all his works and constantly believe God's Holy Word, and obediently keep His commandments." Here the reciprocal nature of the Covenant of which Baptism is the initiatory sacrament is more strongly brought out than in the service books of the other Churches of the Reformation. This makes the efficacy of the sacrament depend upon the reliability of the promising Christ, but it requires from the recipient also a disciplined fulfilment of his part "to his soul's health."

(iii) *Sign of Regeneration.*

Baptism "is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church." Significantly enough, at this point the Article leaves out the term "effectual," which the previous Article on the sacraments used to describe the signs. When it deals with the *promises*, it inserts the idea that Baptism is more than a sign: it is a seal. The Article declares that Baptism does not signify merely our profession of faith, but that it signifies what God does through the instrumentality of Baptism, namely, that He makes us His children and inserts us into His Church.

Here "regeneration" is identical with "insertion into the Church." Baptism is the sacramental sign of the fact that God transplants us out of the sphere of the old life or generation in which we were born, and plants us in the sphere of new life in the Church, where His promises of forgiveness and adoption may be actualized. The Article does not speak of the actualization of these promises in the experience of baptized children, but of the fact that God not only regards our children as His own, but grafts them into the communion of the Church. For it is only in the Church that His promises are effectively realized. Precisely the same teaching is given in the Little Catechism in the Prayer Book, which begins with the questions: "What is your name?" and "Who gave you this name?" The answer to the second is: "My godfathers and godmothers in my Baptism; wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven."

In Baptism the child is taken up into the arms of Christ, as the *Ministration of Public Baptism* explains, it is received into the Ark of Christ's Church, and the prayer is that the child may be born again and be made an heir of everlasting salvation, and ever remain in the number of God's faithful and elect children. The classical Anglican divines were right in interpreting this, as the Reformers did, to mean that the child is now grafted into the circle of God's covenanted mercies, the sphere of life where the Holy Spirit is at work renewing and sanctifying the faithful, and not that in Baptism the child's nature is morally changed. Even in the Caroline period celebrated divines like Hammond, Jeremy Taylor, and Beveridge regularly spoke of the baptized as "unregenerate" (see H. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 616; Bicknell and Carpenter, *The Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 374). The Little Catechism, like the order for Private Baptism, and the order for Confirmation, distinctly interprets what happens in Baptism in terms of God's call.

Two things are involved here :—

(1) The Anglican teaching seems to set aside the idea that Baptism is only a consignation of those previously elected, for the Act of Christ in Baptism in which He takes up children in His arms, is the same as His act of election, in which He sets His love upon us. It is probable that this reflects Bucer's notion of election as taking place through the corporate life of the Church, so that election and incorporation into the Church are ordinarily one and the same thing.

(2) The Anglican standards reject the Roman notion of "baptismal regeneration." As we shall see, many Anglicans took it up again under Arminian influence. Some Anglicans claim that when the Article speaks of Baptism as an "instrument" of ingrafting into the Church, the scholastic idea of causation is involved, but the Article qualifies its statement by speaking only of "those who receive Baptism rightly (*recte*)," which, besides excluding an *ex opere operato* notion of sacramental efficiency, indicates that "instrument" is meant in the legal sense of a "sealed instrument" or document. This is a sense in which Reformed and Anglican divines often use it. It is the testament or sealed deed on the authority of which the children of the Covenant have their inheritance bestowed upon them. It was in this sense too that the application of the sign of the Cross was often interpreted, as the stamping of the seal of the New Covenant upon the body of the baptized.

(iv) *The Promises of Baptism.*

"The promises of the forgiveness of sins and of our adoption to be sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed."

This again is the teaching found in Luther and Calvin. It had already been incorporated into the *Bishops' Book* of 1537 and the *King's Book* of 1543, to the effect that "infants by the Sacrament of Baptism receive remission of sins, the grace and favour of God, and be made thereby very sons and children of God," and where these benefits are not only spoken of as promises but as "the effect and virtue of this sacrament" (*Formularies*, XIX. 7, 9, 253f.). These promises are effectually fulfilled. In answer to the question : "What is the inward and spiritual grace" in Baptism ? the Little Catechism answers : "A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness : for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace." *

In the light of this and what we find in the *Ministration of Public Baptism* particularly, three things may be said about these promises :—

(1) The forgiveness of sin, effectually signed and sealed to the child in Baptism, does not mean a quasi-material renovation. The child's nature still retains carnal affections, but Baptism is the pledge of their death. Forgiveness means that the child is brought under the saving efficacy of

* This "forgiveness of sins" or "death unto sin" is to be understood not in the mediæval or Roman sense, but in that of the Reformation, as Articles IX to XVIII indicate. The articles of agreement between Lutherans and Anglicans of 1538 give a precise statement of this . "In Baptism remission of sins and the grace of Christ is offered to infants and adults . . . that infants in Baptism attain remission of sins and grace, and become children of God, because the promise of grace and life eternal extends not only to adults but also to infants. . . . Because infants are born with original sin they need remission of that sin, and this is so remitted that its imputation is taken away. However the corruption of nature or concupiscence remains in this life, although it begins to be healed, because the Holy Spirit, even in infants, is efficacious and cleanses them" (Cranmer's *Works*, P.S., IV. 279f.).

the death of Christ for sin. Like a manumitted slave, as Becon put it (Park., Soc., I., p. 178), the child is granted release and freedom; though born by nature into the old life under the wrath of God, he is given a new life in which there is no condemnation to those who believe and are baptized (*Art.* IX). Baptism is thus the sacrament of justification, for it is the sign and seal that God will not remember our sins—a sign and seal to which God remains faithful. There is no idea here that Baptism effects immediately a complete cleansing of our natures, or that it has reference only to past sin, so that if sins are incurred in the future their forgiveness must come from another source.

It is not Baptism that is the source of forgiveness: it is the death and resurrection of Christ. Therefore what Baptism signifies avails for the whole life of the baptized, which should consist in an appropriation of forgiveness and in a dying to sin. The Prayer Book office does speak about a "mystical washing" and a "heavenly washing away" of sin, but this is clearly Lutheran language, and refers to the "inward grace" or "the spiritual washing" in distinction from the outward washing of the body, and is designed to show that the child is not washed by any grace included in the water (Ridley, *Works*, Park. Soc., p. 240). As Grindal put it: "In Baptism men regard not greatly the water, but account themselves washed with the blood of Christ" (*Works*, Park. Soc., p. 62). The ultimate washing of regeneration is realized only in the resurrection of the body, but of that heavenly reality, Baptism is already the promise and pledge (Cranmer's *Works*, I., p, 176).

(2) The positive effect of the baptismal promises is described as "adoption to be sons of God by the Holy Ghost." "The inward and spiritual grace" is not only a death to sin, but "a new birth unto righteousness," as the Catechism says. This is not understood in the mediæval sense of an infusion of substantive righteousness, but as a clothing of the child in the righteousness of Christ (Cranmer's *Cat.*, pp. 182, 184, 188f.). This is the gift of the whole Christ with His righteousness to the baptized, so that all through his life the child may grow up in that righteousness in Christ, appropriating it by faith, and living it out in the obedience of faith. Baptism is the sealing of the Father's claim upon the child, and His invitation to the child to live as His son. It is the sign and seal that the child's life has been translated into "a state of salvation" in Christ, being grafted into the body of Christ's congregation. It is the sacramental entry of the child into the new divine life which through the Spirit is poured out in the Church of the faithful. But though Baptism signifies the whole Gospel, the administration of the sign and seal is only the beginning, as the prayers before and after Baptism imply: "O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in these children may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in them. Grant that all carnal affections may die in them, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in them. Grant that they may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh. . . ." "Humbly we beseech Thee to grant, that he being dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in His death, may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin; that as he is made partaker of the death of Thy Son, he may also be partaker of His resurrection; so that finally, with the residue of Thy holy Church, he may be an inheritor of Thine everlasting kingdom; through Christ our Lord. Amen."

(v) *Baptism and Faith.*

According to the Article, Baptism is not only the sign of the profession of our faith, but the sign whereby "*faith is confirmed and grace increased*

by virtue of prayer unto God." Anglican commentators profess to have difficulty in determining whether the reference is to the faith of the witnesses and congregation, or to that of the recipient of Baptism. The language, however, seems to have been taken from Calvin who regularly speaks of Baptism as confirming faith, even when speaking of infants. But along with "confirming" he also uses words like "begetting," "rousing," "nourishing," and "increasing" (cf. *Inst.* IV. xiv. 15). Similarly the Article on the sacraments speaks of them as effectual signs "by which He doth not only quicken, but also strengthens and confirms our faith in Him" (XXV). Baptism is thus to be regarded as the means of grace whereby God begins to beget or quicken faith. This is not to be understood in Luther's sense of a gift of faith to the infant in Baptism, but rather as meaning that from his Baptism the child grows up in faith under the quickening power of God's Spirit. The preamble to the *Ministration of Public Baptism*, however, would suggest that the Article has in mind here also the faith of the congregation, which is strengthened and increased by God through the baptismal service in response to prayer. The clause quoted above is therefore a most important part of the Anglican doctrine of Baptism, for all that precedes is seen to involve the response of faith in the life of prayer. The efficacy of Baptism is thus related not only to the sovereign freedom of God's grace, but also to the growing faith and continuous response of the baptized.

Two points should be mentioned about the order for Public Baptism in the Prayer Book :—

(1) Unlike the Reformed Church, the Church of England requires sponsors or godparents other than the parents. In the 1549 Prayer Book the baptismal questions were addressed to the children to be baptized, and were answered by the sponsors on their behalf. In the 1552 Prayer Book the questions were put directly to the sponsors, who did not answer in the name of the child, but undertook to be "sureties" for the future fulfilment of the vows by the baptized children. Baptism is not ministered on the ground of the faith of others, though it is to be given in the company of the faithful. (This is reinforced by the service for Confirmation.) Baptism is given solely on the ground of God's faithfulness, but requires from the child a conscious response, as soon as he can make it with knowledge, and a whole life of faith.

(2) The differences between the earlier and the later orders for Public Baptism shows that the accessory rites omitted were replaced by prayer, thus completing the change of the ministration of the sacrament to one where the "virtue" lies in "prayer unto God." The signing with the Cross was retained, and later given considerable reinforcement in the canons of 1604, but it was removed from its place before Baptism to a place after it, so that it is apparent, as Canon XXX puts it, that "the infant baptized is by virtue of Baptism, before it be signed with the sign of the Cross, received into the congregation of Christ's flock, as a perfect member thereof, and not by any power ascribed unto the sign of the Cross." Thus, if omitted, "it doth not detract anything from the effect and substance of it." It is nevertheless enjoined as consonant with the Word of God. While the signing is enjoined, the whole clearly makes faith and repentance necessary to the fulfilment of the baptismal pledges. "We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him with the sign of the Cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end."

(vi) *Infant Baptism.*

Article XXVII ends with a single sentence on Infant Baptism : " The Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." In the *Book of Common Prayer* it is the passage from Mark 10 : 13-16 that is prescribed as the lesson. It is followed by this comment : " Friends, you hear in this Gospel the words of our Saviour Christ, that He commanded the children to be brought unto Him ; how He blamed those that would have kept them from Him ; how He exhorteth all men to follow their innocency. You perceive how by His outward gesture and deed He declared His good-will toward them ; for He embraced them. Doubt ye not, therefore, but earnestly believe that He will likewise favourably receive these present infants ; that He will embrace them with the arms of His mercy ; that He will give unto them the blessing of eternal life, and make them partakers of His everlasting kingdom. Wherefore we being persuaded of the good-will of our heavenly Father toward these infants, declared by His Son Jesus Christ ; and nothing doubting but that He favourably alloweth this charitable work of ours in bringing these children to His holy Baptism ; let us faithfully and devoutly give thanks unto Him. . . ." This is substantially the same teaching as we find in Calvin's *Commentary* on this incident in his *Harmony of the Gospels*. Calvin's teaching is expounded at length by Philpot, though without mentioning his name (*Works*, Park. Soc., pp. 275-284). Much the same teaching is given in the *Homilies*, though in briefer compass. The following excellent summary of the Reformed and Anglican position as given by Dr G. W. Bromiley may suffice :—

> " The emphatic language of the Prayer Book does not point to a work done, in the Scholastic and Tridentine sense, but rather to a promise made. The promise can be counted upon as already fulfilled because it is the promise of God who sees the end from the beginning, a promise vicariously realised in Jesus Christ. . . . The renewal sealed in Baptism is only by promise. We are righteous not because we are made righteous but because God counts us as righteous. The baptismal forgiveness and regeneration is not a work done, except in so far as it is already accomplished in Jesus Christ. It does not require to be demonstrated, for the entry into it, and therefore its demonstration, is the lifelong work of the true Christian. If there is a real work of Baptism, it is not indiscriminate, nor is it necessarily revealed or fulfilled in the moment of administration. In Christ, and by faith, the work has been done from the very beginning. That is why Baptism may be administered just as well to infants as to adults, if they have the external qualifications. But in individual life it is fulfilled only with a true conversion to God, a continuance in the Christian life, and the consummation in literal death and resurrection. Where there is no conversion and continuance, and therefore no final consummation, the proferred benefits of Baptism are clearly rejected. There is, therefore, no effective operation of the Holy Spirit, and no true Baptism " (*op. cit.*, pp. 205f.).

One other point should be added to this regarding the Anglican understanding of Infant Baptism. This appears in the Prayer Book order for *Private Baptism*. Children are not " without great cause and necessity " to be baptized at home, but if they are so baptized, they are afterwards to be brought into the Church where the baptismal service is completed with the appropriate prayers, renunciations, and promises on the part of the sponsors. This means that Infant Baptism must not be isolated from

the sacramental life of the Church, nor must the grace promised and sealed in Baptism be isolated from the whole life of faith to which the child is pledged in the midst of the Church, and from which he can later isolate himself only at the cost of rejecting his Baptism.

(vii) *Baptism and Confirmation.*

The rite of Confirmation is not regarded in the Anglican formularies as a full and proper sacrament, but rather as an adjunct to Baptism of which it formed a part in the Early Church. Its use in the Prayer Book contributes to the integration of Baptism with the life and growth of the child within the Church, and insists that children baptized in infancy be brought to personal decision and faith before being admitted to Holy Communion, by taking upon themselves directly the vows undertaken by their sponsors at their Baptism.

Three reasons are given for Confirmation :—

> (1) First, in order that children after due instruction, " with their own mouth, and with their own consent," may ratify and renew the vows undertaken at their Baptism.
>
> (2) Secondly, that supported by the blessing and prayers of the Church, they may receive strength to resist temptation at an age when they are particularly open to the assaults of evil.
>
> (3) Thirdly, that they should openly profess their faith, and promise to be obedient to the will of God.

Although the main stress lies here upon the confirmation of vows, the rite is also used to assure the confirmands of God's favour and gracious goodness towards them, and to give them entry to the full fellowhip of the Church in being admitted to Holy Communion. At the same time it is made clear that Confirmation, though resolutely required by the Church, is not necessary for salvation, for baptized children, dying in infancy without it, are " undoubtedly saved." Confirmation is not a " Sacrament of the Gospel" It does not convey salvation, but is a " sacramental " means of growth in grace, related to what the Article on Baptism speaks of in the words " grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God." Thus at Confirmation the bishop lays his hand on the head of the child and says *in prayer* : " Defend, O Lord, this Thy child with Thy heavenly grace, that he may continue Thine for ever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he come unto Thine everlasting Kingdom."

It is worth noting that the Elizabethan and most, if not all, of the Caroline divines, in agreement with the Anglican Reformers, refused to regard Confirmation as a sacrament " completing Baptism " ; for that would be an " injury to Baptism." Many of them cited Calvin in support of this, though they also cited him in support for the view that Confirmation as an act of blessing and dedication of those already baptized should not be neglected. There is certainly no suggestion in the official Anglican documents for a rite of Confirmation as the second-half of Baptism, completing it by the sacramental bestowal of the Holy Spirit—as if Baptism were only given in the name of the Father and the Son, and not also in the name of the Holy Spirit.

Note on Baptismal Regeneration.

The tendency to lapse back from the Evangelical and Reformed doctrine of the *Thirty-Nine Articles* and the *Book of Common Prayer* into mediæval conceptions has nowhere been more apparent, or aroused more controversy

than in regard to " baptismal regeneration " (cf. Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.* V. ix. 2). In the mediæval view sacramental grace was thought of as operating causally and physically in the sacraments, and as effecting changes in the essence of a man's being. In the nature of the case, Baptism, with its special grace, caused a substantial regeneration of the soul of the child, entailing an entire eradication of original sin, and infusing habitual sanctifying grace. This was a baptismal regeneration of a person's being through grace.

Although this doctrine was universally repudiated by the Churches of the Reformation as unbiblical, this notion of regeneration was revived by the Arminians, who identified it with conversion, and by many Anglicans whose reaction from extreme Calvinism laid them open to the influence of Arminianism (and to its Roman form in Molinism). The difference between the Arminians and these Anglicans lay not so much in the concept of regeneration itself as in its reference by Arminians to conversion, and by these Anglicans to Baptism. In both cases regeneration was interpreted in the sense of a psychological, moral, and even metaphysical renewal—as infused grace and holiness changing the nature of the baptized or converted. Applied to Baptism this led to the error of " baptismal regeneration," and applied to conversion it led to the error of " sinless perfectionism." Both forms of this error are repudiated by the standards of the Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican Churches.

In name of the Commission,

THOMAS F. TORRANCE, *Convener.*
JOHN HERON, *Secretary.*

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REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Commission wishes to thank Presbyteries for their very helpful and encouraging comments. Many have contained valuable suggestions for the formulation of the doctrine of Baptism. Others have drawn attention to practical matters upon which the Assembly will ultimately require to pass judgement. Almost all have expressed a growing appreciation of the work of the Commission and the lines along which its thought is developing.

For various reasons it has not proved possible to have a draft statement of the doctrine of Baptism ready in time for submission to this Assembly. Certain Presbyteries, however, asked that the Commission should bring its historical survey up to the present time, and this has been done in the following pages. The Commission hopes that the Church will find this both interesting and helpful, for many of the men with whom this survey deals are still remembered among us, and continue to exercise an influence upon the life and teaching of the Church. From this review of the recent past the Commission believes that we can trace the elements of strength in each of the traditions that have now come together in the life of our national Church, and at the same time see the influences which have, at various points, tended to lead us in mistaken directions.

Another thing which the Commission has done in this year's Report is to give a statement expressing as fairly as possible the position of the Baptist Churches, and focusing attention on the points at which we disagree with them. This also has been done in response to the request of several Presbyteries.

The Commission has not thought it necessary to provide any further consideration of the other major position apart from our own, viz. that of the Roman Catholic Church. Its official teaching was dealt with in the 1957 Report, on the basis of the writings of Thomas Aquinas and the decisions of the Council of Trent.

One further point is worth mentioning. In the Introduction to last year's Report the Commission mentioned that the draft statement of the doctrine of Baptism will, if approved by the Assembly, be sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act. Some Presbyteries have asked that the draft statement should be sent down to Presbyteries for discussion before being sent down under the Barrier Act. With this suggestion the Commission is in hearty agreement. The sole purpose of mentioning the Barrier Act last year was to make it clear that time must elapse before the preparation of popular statements for the use of parents and young people. Such statements can only be produced *after* the Church has officially declared its mind upon the doctrine.

The Commission again commends the book, *The Biblical Doctrine of Baptism*, which has been published by the Saint Andrew Press, and hopes that the Church will find it useful as a guide to the understanding of the Biblical teaching which must be the foundation of all our doctrine.

With this year's Report the Commission has completed its preliminary task—the study of the Biblical doctrine, and the study of the doctrine and practice in the history of the Church. It hopes to be in a position to submit a draft statement of the doctrine of Baptism to next year's General Assembly. It will greatly help the Commission in essaying this difficult task if Presbyteries will let it have their comments and suggestions by the earliest possible date.

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II. BAPTISM IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND 1843-1959

1. THE MODERN TRADITION

The problems and tensions which were carried over into this period from the preceding one were summarized in the Epilogue to the 1958 Report under the following three heads : A. The contradiction between Federal Theology and the Gospel of Grace. B. The divorce of the Atonement from the Incarnation. C. The separation of the Church Visible from the Church Invisible.

The Calvin Translation Society, which was founded in 1843, by issuing new translations of Calvin's works, stirred up in all branches of the Church an understanding of Christ and the Gospel akin to that of the Scots Reformers. This led to an increasingly evangelistic and missionary outlook which helped to undermine the rationalistic tendencies of the Federal Theology, with its doctrine that Christ died for the elect only, on the one hand, and the " moralism " of the Moderates, on the other. Thus within the divided witness of the Church a new unity in the Gospel began to be forged.

Both in Scotland and on the Continent an increasing tendency towards subjectivism in theology and philosophy had been noticeable since the middle of the seventeenth century. Although the rationalism of the Federal Theology may be interpreted as a reaction against this, it served only to provoke a more vehement pietistic reaction which found the essence of Protestant Christianity in the individual's " immediate " experience of the divine, and in the cult of religious moralism. This formed the dominant spiritual climate of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which saw the great flowering of theological and philosophical subjectivism all over Europe.

Within this spiritual climate several factors which influenced the understanding of Baptism may be noted.

(a) The Evangelical Revival

The origins of this movement may be traced to the latter part of the eighteenth century. The evangelistic urgency which it inspired gave rise to the modern Foreign Mission enterprise. Thereby the Church was incalculably enriched, but some difficulties with regard to Baptism were accentuated. Some people preserved the insight of the Reformers that the preaching of the Word is the living action of Christ within the Church, convincing and converting men. Others tended to understand preaching primarily as instruction of the mind and heart, by the help of which men might come to an inward spiritual experience. The latter looked on the sacraments as quite unimportant, or merely as acts through which the converted give outward expression to their inward spiritual condition. Thus they lost the Reformed understanding of the sacraments as *acts of God* which are both *declaratory* of the Gospel and *instrumental* in its application.

(b) The Rise of Liberalism

Liberalism represents the emergence, within the Churches of the Reformation, of the humanist spirit of the Renaissance, with its stress upon the autonomy of the reason, the freedom of the will, and the self-sufficiency of the conscience. This meant the dominance of rational and ethical categories, and the subordination of Christianity to " Religion " and morality. The importance of theology was minimized, education and culture were substituted for the Gospel of salvation, and the Church came to be regarded

largely as a social institution. Consequently the sacraments were acknowledged only for their value in popular education, as the outward, ritual and symbolic draping of spiritual truths. This is the origin of the idea, still widespread, that Baptism is but the picturesque presentation of a vague conception of the divine Fatherhood.

Liberalism, however, made important contributions to the life of the Church. (1) It rediscovered the concept of the Kingdom of God, though it was unable properly to interpret its full Biblical significance. (2) It focused attention on the historical Jesus, though its own categories proved inadequate for the understanding of Him. (3) Above all, Liberal scholars led the way in the field of Biblical study. All of these have a direct bearing upon the recovery of the Biblical doctrine of Baptism.

(c) The Historical and Critical Investigation of the Bible

Of all the movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this has the most far-reaching importance where Baptism is concerned. It initiated the most exhaustive scientific research into the Christian documents that has ever been undertaken. At first this operated largely with rationalistic and subjectivist presuppositions, and led to a presentation of Jesus and the Gospel in terms of nineteenth-century idealism and subjectivism, but the more rigorously scientific the study has become the more has it been driven to interpret the New Testament in the light of its own inherent unity, and this has led to an exegesis in which theological understanding is controlled by rigorous attention to the language and text. Through these studies the Church has been brought back inescapably to Christ Himself, as He gives Himself to us through revelation, and to a doctrine of the Church and sacraments governed by what He has done for us, and is still doing for us, in uniting us to Himself.

(d) The Revival of Worship

The renewal of interest in worship shown by the re-publication of John Knox's *Book of Common Order* in 1840, led to the production of many Service Books. Unlike much of the liturgical revival in England, this was not a movement of romantic self-expression. The emphasis was laid on the primacy of God's action to which we respond in praise and prayer, though it must be admitted that the movement did not escape the prevailing subjectivism, as many of the hymns of the period clearly show. The reappropriation of the Church's rich inheritance in Knox's *Book of Common Order*, and in the *Westminster Directory* helped to restore the sacraments to their proper place in the worship of the Church. The sacraments were again seen as means of grace through which, in their union with the Word preached, Christ acts upon His people to heal and renew them, and to lift them up in Himself into fellowship with the divine life and love. It must, however, be admitted that this revival of worship was not able to free itself altogether from the false Roman conception of indwelling grace, which had come back into the Church through pietistic influences. Consequently these Service Books occasionally speak of inward grace as something *channelled* through the sacraments, as do also some of the hymns of the period.

(e) The Continuing Tradition

Throughout the nineteenth century the Church continued to be schooled in the catechetical teaching of the Westminster divines, while doctrinal instruction in the colleges and divinity halls was still given in the tradition of scholastic Calvinism. As time went on this Calvinism was corrected to some extent by the renewed study of Calvin himself and of the Bible

and the Westminster teaching on the sacraments was re-examined in the light of the teaching of John Knox, Robert Bruce, and indeed Thomas Boston. Thus the old Presbyterian tradition continued to have a strong influence until the beginning of this century. The combination of this continuing tradition with the movements and tendencies noted above provided distinct variations in the general tradition of the Church.

2. THE SECESSION AND U.P. TRADITION

(a) The Original Secession Testimony

The *Original Secession Testimony* of 1827 and 1842 continued to be normative for this branch of the Church until its eventual re-union. The teaching about the sacraments in the *Testimony* has two chief characteristics. (1) " The primary end of the sacraments is, the confirmation on the part of God of His grant to us of all the blessings of His covenant ; whereas the primary end of social vowing, is the confirmation on our part of our allegiance to Him, and our joint adherence to His cause " (II. xvii. iii. 2). (2) " Both the sacraments of the New Testament represent and seal Christ, and all the benefits of the covenant of grace to believers " (II. xviii. ii.). That is to say, the sacraments have to do with *God's act* and are *His* confirmation rather than our act of adherence, and they are directly related to Christ. Although this is true of both sacraments, " Baptism is more especially the sign and seal of the remission of our sins, and the acceptance of our persons, through the blood and righteousness of Christ, and of the regeneration of our hearts by His Holy Spirit " (*ib.*). The *Testimony* then adds " to assert that Baptism with water is regeneration, or remission of sins, is to confound the sign with the things signified by it ; that though an external means of salvation, and on that account not to be unnecessarily omitted, yet it is not essential to salvation ;—that not only those who profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to Him, but also the infants of such as are members of the visible Church are to be baptized ;—that Baptism is rightly administered by sprinkling ; and that, from the nature of the ordinance, it should be dispensed in public, and in connection with the administration of the Word " (*ib.*).

In justification of the Baptism of infants the *Testimony* cites and expounds the passages from the Gospels and the Epistles discussed in the Commission's 1955 Report and in the volume, *The Biblical Doctrine of Baptism*. In justification of the rite of sprinkling it points out that this mode of Baptism is greatly favoured by the analogy of the sprinkling of blood used in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where " our Lord's blood, not only in allusion to the type, but probably with an express reference to the mode of Christian Baptism, is called ' the blood of sprinkling ' " (*ib.*). The whole intention of the *Testimony* was to keep the Church close to the teaching of the Westminster standards ; but it becomes clear that the actual practice of Baptism left much to be desired, for in the " Act for Renewing the Covenants " acknowledgment is made " that we have not duly made use of the sacraments, as seals of the covenant of grace and of the promises therein made to us in Christ. In offering our children to the Lord in Baptism, we have not been suitably affected with our own and our children's defilement by original guilt and corruption ; we have not duly considered and esteemed the free love and grace of God, which has opened to us, and to our seed, a fountain for sin and uncleanness ; nor been duly concerned that they might be regenerated and united to Christ."

(B) Principal David S. Cairns

The following passage from the unpublished papers of the late Principal D. S. Cairns, D.D., is noteworthy :—

"Here above all, we have the example of Jesus Himself, who, we are told, when children were brought to Him, took them in His arms and blessed them, and said 'Of such is the Kingdom of God.' Here we have indubitable history. If He did this with His human body of flesh and blood, ought not the Christian Church which is His body, to do it too? But if Baptism means the communication of the Holy Spirit, can we think of such a gift being communicated to a child, who as yet can neither speak nor think nor believe? We cannot do so, certainly, if we subjectivize the gift of the Spirit, and interpret it as meaning simply our human knowledge of God. But if it be an objective reality, why should one not think of it as being given to a child in answer to the prayer of its parents and the Christian community to which it is admitted? The germs of the direst temptations and sins are present in the youngest child. Why should we be compelled to believe that God's Spirit may not, also, be waiting from the first in the unfolding consciousness for its full appropriation? The contrary view seems to me logically to imply that the child must normally grow up away from God and that prayer for infant children cannot avail."

(C) Church Practice

In *Presbyterian Forms of Service*, issued by the U.P. Church in 1891, the address insists that "This ordinance is the sign and seal not of anything man can accomplish, but of what *God alone* can do." Similarly, in the second order it is declared that "the washing with water in the name of the Holy Trinity is at once a sign of grace, a pledge of grace, and a means of grace." It is because the proper stress is laid upon God's act of grace that children so baptized "are recognized by Baptism as members of the visible Church." Four reasons are given for the Baptism of children: God declares that children are included in His Covenant; our Lord Jesus Christ says that they are of the Kingdom of Heaven; the Apostle Peter testifies that the promise is not only to believers but also to their children; the Apostle Paul testifies that the children of believers are holy unto the Lord."

What the Baptism of children means is well summed up in the following prayer :

"Almighty and most merciful Father, who claimest the children as Thy heritage, and who hast established an everlasting covenant with Thy people and with their offspring, we beseech Thee graciously to receive and bless this little child, whom his parents now dedicate to Thee. As we, in Thy name, baptize him with the Baptism of water, do Thou, in the fulness of Thy grace, endow him with the gift of Thy Holy Spirit. Accept him for Thine own possession; set upon him the consecrating seal of Thy Covenant; and evermore endue him with Thy heavenly grace; that to his life's end he may glorify Thee in his body and spirit, which Thou hast redeemed through Jesus Christ."

It is noteworthy that while the element of union with Christ is clearly taught, the actual content or the thing signified in Baptism is regarded as an inward experience rather than as the objective fact which has already taken place in Christ. The focusing of attention upon the subjective rather than the objective element makes Baptism attain its meaning in a present endowment of the Spirit leading to an experienced new birth in the future. This stress upon the new birth is a prominent feature of the baptismal

teaching in this tradition. " We are all born inclined by nature to evil. In order to be saved we need, by Divine grace, to obtain regeneration, faith, repentance. Hence our Lord Jesus Christ has said, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. The water of Baptism symbolizes the Divine grace which blots out our sins ; but that grace, if it is to be efficacious in us, must ever be received with the faith which the Holy Spirit imparts ; for, as the Apostle Peter reminds us, the Baptism which saves is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God " (Order for the Baptism of Adults).

3. THE FREE CHURCH TRADITION

After 1843 the Free Church sought to renew its theology and to build up its life by a fresh study of its classical sources. These were found not so much in the writings of the Reformers as in those of the scholastic Calvinists of the Westminster period and the Federal theologians on the Continent. This tended to raise in an acute form the tensions which the eighteenth century had failed to resolve. Thus a reassertion of hyper-Calvinism and predestinationism clashed with the moralism and semi-Pelagianism that had grown out of the notion of the Covenant as a contract —*i.e.*, there was a renewed conflict between those who maintained irresistible grace and particular election on the one hand, and those who believed in a strictly conditional offer of the Gospel requiring active human co-operation for the efficacy of grace on the other. This revived Federalism, however, could only lead to the same moralism and semi-Pelagianism as before. These in turn became a seed-bed for Liberalism. It is these internal tensions that are the ultimate reason for the independent survival of splinter Churches stemming from the Disruption.

The effect of the tension between hyper-Calvinism and moralism upon the doctrine of Baptism is reflected in the Service Books produced as recently as in the early years of this century. Meanwhile the development of Biblical research had opened up the way for a critical reconsideration of the difficulties inherent in Federalism. During the decades of Liberal ascendency, Biblical studies tended towards a superficially symbolic and moralistic understanding of the sacraments, but the profounder and more scientific Biblical teaching of great scholars like James Denney, H. A. A. Kennedy, and William Manson radically altered the picture, and laid a basis for a deeper appreciation of Biblical and Reformed doctrine.

(a) Andrew A. Bonar

Andrew A. Bonar may be chosen as representative of the group of strong evangelicals in the Free Church. His pamphlet, *A Brief View of Baptism Opened up and Applied*, was published in October 1844.

His approach has the almost inevitable tendency to make adult Baptism the norm, and to direct attention towards the cognitive aspect of it, stressing the need for active human co-operation in order that grace may be effective. Infant Baptism becomes hard to interpret, and there is an unresolved tension between adult and infant Baptism in Bonar's exposition.

Baptism is the sign and seal of our union with Christ in His death and resurrection—a union which is claimed by all who believe. The water of Baptism signifies the blood of Christ, and the baptized person's union with the water represents his spiritual union with Christ, whose blood cleanses the soul, as water cleanses the body (pp. 4, 9).

The blood is the life of the Substitute taken for us, and it is through the death of Christ that the Wrath of God is quenched, and all the blessings

are made ours. It is the reality of these blessings which is attested by Baptism, and also the reality of God's willingness to give an all-sufficient righteousness freely, through union with Christ in His death (p. 10 f.). " See, says God, this is what you need and I freely give ; and that you need it and that I give it freely, behold the seal of the King " (p. 11).

All who belong to Christ have a right to receive Baptism, but a man must be a believer in heart, and not merely a baptized man, if he is to be saved. It is not from his Baptism that he receives salvation. All Baptism does is that it attests the willingness of God to save.

The Lord gives the sign and seal of Baptism to all who belong to Himself, because He loves them personally ; but He also gives it to the children of believing parents, for the love He bears the parents. Ever since Abraham got the seal of circumcision, it has been a principle that the infants of believing parents are to be offered whatever their parents obtained (p. 13). Hence Peter can say, " The promise is unto you and to your children." There is no argument used against the fitness of infant Baptism which might not have been used to dissuade Jewish parents from circumcising their children (p. 12).

Bonar observes that doubts concerning infant Baptism are based on a wrong comparison of this sacrament with the Lord's Supper. The Supper does require faith in the recipients, but in Baptism " the Lord Himself brings forward the blessing. . . . The Lord is He who is active in this sacrament ; the baptized one is wholly recipient. The sign and seal of Baptism are meant to declare the Lord's feelings towards the individual, and surely He may do so towards an infant as much as towards an aged person " (p. 14).

What does the Lord do for the child ? " These swaddling bands wrap a sinner. . . . The child new-born has a depraved heart and will manifest self-will and ungodliness very soon." Nevertheless the Lord comes forward to the little child of His believing servants bringing blessing (p. 16 f.). He does not say He will take away its original sin, or regenerate its soul. In tens of thousands of cases it is clear that this has not happened in Baptism. Yet it may happen. " The Lord may do it indeed in the case of some, bending the twig towards Himself in that solemn hour ; and He might be expected to do it far oftener, if the number of believing parents was greater " (p. 17).

What He always does is to show the child His goodwill by specially selecting it to receive the sacrament. He declares that His scheme of salvation is so free that it can reach to this child. " He can save it—though it cannot utter thanks, though it cannot even requite Him by one conscious smile of gratitude " (p. 18). He shows a particular readiness to bless that child and He keeps a special eye on it ever after (p. 19). " If one of these baptized ones die in infancy, rest your sorrowful souls on Him who expressed such desire towards your child. What could He mean by showing it all this kindness, and then quickly taking it away ? Surely He meant to give it heaven before it could refuse " (p. 19).

(b) James Bannerman

The Free Church, in seeking to be as faithful as possible to the Westminster Standards, produced theologians of great power such as William Cunningham, James Bannerman, Robert S. Candlish, James S. Candlish, and John Macpherson, whose teaching was set forth not only in works for theologians but also in the famous *Handbooks for Bible Classes* which had a widespread influence. They were opposed both to Tractarian views of sacramental grace and to Socinian and Baptist views of faith. There was, however, a difference among the theologians themselves which helps us

to see the difficulties involved. A comparison of the teaching of James Bannerman and James S. Candlish will bring this out.

In *The Church of Christ* (1868) Bannerman worked out a general definition of the sacramental principle, and then sought to apply it to the two Gospel sacraments. This had the advantage of treating Baptism as a sacrament in the full sense, like the Lord's Supper, but it meant that the exposition of Baptism, notably as applied to infants, had to be squared with an abstract definition already laid down. This proved so difficult that some modification of it was required in its application to infants—a weakness frankly admitted by Bannerman. This represents a direct departure from the teaching of John Knox and his *Book of Common Order* (cf. 1958 Report, p. 12 ff.).

Bannerman describes Baptism under four aspects :—

(i) Baptism " is a positive institution of Christ in His Church," and cannot therefore be regarded as dispensable or indifferent (*op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 42 f.).

(ii) Baptism " is an external and sensible sign of an internal grace, a spiritual truth embodied in outward action " (p. 44 f.). The contrast between inner and outer, invisible and visible, is made much wider than in the teaching of the Reformers. Together with this goes a tendency to speak of " sacramental grace " and of " indwelling grace " which is too close to the Roman conception ; but in order to avoid any *ex opere operato* conception of its efficacy, sacramental grace is expounded only in *cognitive* terms—*i.e.*, as instruction, representation of truth, confirmation, assurance, &c. Within this way of speaking the old teaching is set forth.

(iii) Baptism is " a seal of a federal transaction between two parties in the ordinance " (p. 46).

(iv) Baptism " is a means for confirming the faith of the believer and adding to the grace which he possessed before " (p. 49). The real importance of these words comes out in the explication : " If the believer's part of the transaction be the embodiment in the outward sign of the spiritual act whereby he dedicates himself to Christ,—and if Christ's part of the transaction be the giving of Himself and His grace to the believer *in return*, then it is plain that the ordinance, so understood, must be a divinely instituted means of grace to the parties who rightly partake of it " (p. 49). This being the case, it is very difficult to apply Baptism to infants with the same meaning, for, as Bannerman puts it, Baptism is " a seal of more than the covenant generally ; it is a seal of the covenant in its appropriation by the believer to himself personally in the ordinance " (p. 107). This can be extended to infants only on a severely forensic interpretation of Baptism, which Bannerman carries through in three main contentions : (*a*) " Baptism in the case of all infants baptized gives to them an interest in the Church of Christ as its members " (p. 112). " Baptism does not constitute him a member of the kingdom of heaven, but it brings him to the very door, and bids him there knock and it shall be opened unto him " (p. 113). (*b*) " Baptism, in the case of all infants baptized, gives them a right of property in the covenant of grace ;. which may in after life, by means of their personal faith, be supplemented by a right of possession " (p. 113 f.). Baptism is thus the charter or title to property in Christ, but " in itself it is incomplete and inadequate to put him into personal possession of his heritage " (p. 114). (*c*) " There seems to be reason for inferring that, in the case of infants regenerated in infancy, Baptism is ordinarily connected with that regeneration " (p. 117). This refers for the most part to those predestined to salvation who die before emerging from infancy. In their case the saving change in their natures is intimately connected with Baptism.

Three comments may be made on the teaching of Bannerman :—

(i) The ordinance of Baptism is represented as a purely forensic, judicial transaction between two contracting parties, in which on the promise of God certain rights are made over *in return* for certain prescribed responses.

(ii) The spiritual content of Baptism is in all cases an experience in the soul or nature of the baptized—in the case of adults this is prior to Baptism, in the case of infants it usually follows it, though it may in some instances be concomitant with it. Baptism is not viewed as the objective reality which has once and for all taken place in Christ. What has taken place in Christ is only the ground upon which the conditional offer of grace is made in the ordinance of Baptism.

(iii) The grace given in Baptism is not thought of as wholly identical with the person and work of Christ towards us and on our behalf, but as something conditioned by the reciprocal action of those to whom it is directed. Bannerman takes great pains to attack the notion of the efficacy of the sacraments found in Roman and Tractarian theology, on the ground that the Church cannot dispense divine grace, for that would mean that it could control it. His own view, however, is open to the same charge since, in effect, he makes the operation of divine grace depend on human response, and so gives to man implicit control over grace. (This was precisely the criticism of Richard Baxter made by Fraser of Brea, and of the Jesuit Molina made by the Reformed theologians on the Continent.) Bannerman's error is in effect that he denies the freedom and sovereignty and unconditional nature of God's grace. The Federal theologians had sought to extricate themselves from this charge by insisting on the absolute nature of predestination, for only those who were elected so to do co-operated savingly with divine grace. This, however, involved the untenable cleavage between the unconditional covenant of redemption and a conditional covenant of grace. The root of the trouble lay in the false Mediæval notions of grace still lurking in the Church. These notions later came under heavy attack from James Denney, H. A. A. Kennedy, and John Oman.

(c) James S. Candlish

A striking contrast to Bannerman's teaching is found in the widely influential work of James S. Candlish of Glasgow. This is found in his Bible Class Handbook on *The Sacraments* and in a collection of his lectures posthumously issued in 1899 under the title *The Christian Salvation*. In Candlish's thinking the abstract Federal idea is replaced by a more Biblical conception of the covenant will of God the Father. He wills to adopt us as His children in and through the person and work of His Son. Candlish consequently develops a fuller and stronger doctrine of the Church as the fellowship of those who are united to Christ as His Body. He insists that there is only " one Church which in different aspects is invisible and visible." The sacraments are therefore related directly to Christ and His Church through the Spirit, and a personal relation of union and communion takes the place of a merely forensic relation. The sacraments are not expounded, as in Bannerman, in terms of a general sacramental principle, but as the two Gospel sacraments in terms of their relation to Christ and His work. Candlish objects to the teaching of Cunningham and Bannerman that adult Baptism must be adopted as the norm and infant Baptism expounded as an abnormal modification of it, and so he returns to the teaching of the Reformers and of the Early Church. We may summarize his teaching as follows :—

(i) Baptism and the Lord's Supper

The sacraments " represent Christ and His work of salvation not merely objectively in itself, but subjectively in its application to the believer. . . .

This application has two parts or sides, one in which man is *passive* or *acted upon* by God's Spirit, and the other in which *being acted upon* he acts also himself. These two aspects are presented to us in the two sacraments of the New Testament respectively, and serve to explain their leading differences. In Baptism, as in circumcision, we have an outward action in which the subject is passive—he is washed in water; in the Lord's Supper, as in the Passover, we have one in which the subject is necessarily active—he eats and drinks. The former, therefore, approximately represents that moment or stage in spiritual life in which the soul is simply acted upon by the Spirit, which is distinctively called regeneration; the latter, that in which the soul is active, which is repentance, faith, and the new life. These two are different in some important respects, and together they give a complete view of the way in which we are made partakers of Christ and His benefits" (*The Christian Salvation*, p. 140 ff.).

(ii) The meaning of Baptism

The general significance apparent in the action of washing with water is the cleansing of the soul from sin. This Candlish expounds under four heads: (*a*) "Baptism teaches that all who are out of Christ are morally and spiritually unclean by reason of sin" (*The Sacraments*, p. 54). (*b*) "Baptism teaches that just as washing cleanses the body, so God in Christ cleanses the soul by the Holy Spirit" (*op. cit.*, p. 55). (*c*) "Baptism teaches that this cleansing is only to be attained through fellowship with the death of Christ" (*ib.*). The relation of Baptism to the death of Christ, Candlish sees to be grounded upon God's sending of His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, that He might condemn sin in the flesh. "So truly was He in the likeness of sinful flesh that He underwent that Baptism at the hands of John that was a testimony of the need of cleansing; and by the bloody Baptism of His death He was freed from the sin of the world that He bore, so that rising from the dead, He became a quickening Spirit to give new life to all who enter into the fellowship of His sufferings. Our Lord's words speaking of His sufferings unto death as a Baptism (Mark x. 38 f.; Luke xii. 50) and Paul's saying that our Baptism represents our being buried with Christ show that this figure of descending into death with Christ and rising again with Him is also intended in the sacrament; and thus it is that it suggests the idea of our ingrafting into Christ emphasised in the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. We can only have the washing of regeneration by dying with Christ; as on the other hand, if He wash us not we have no part with Him" (John xiii. 8) (*op. cit.*, p. 56). (*d*) "Baptism teaches that by this process of death with Christ and new birth, we become His as our Lord and God. We are baptized unto the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: we are sanctified to Him as a people specially His own. . . . He is thus a God to us as the Three-One Jehovah: in the person of the Father, over us, as our Father in Heaven; in the person of the Son, with us, as our brother and leader; in the person of the Holy Ghost, in us, as the principle of our new life" (*ib.*). To this Candlish adds two important statements: (1) There is one Baptism, by which we are incorporated not into any local or sectional Church only, but into the one holy Catholic Church of Christ. Baptism is the great symbol of the unity of the Church of Christ under her one head. (2) The things signified by Baptism are the great fundamental truths of the Gospel (*op. cit.*, p. 57).

(iii) The Efficacy of Baptism

Baptism "is a token of the great and precious *objective truth*, that the whole of that complete deliverance from sin, and eternal life are in Christ Jesus" (*op. cit.*, p. 60). Baptism is certainly related to Christian experience

but when we remember the fulness of its meaning and its grounding in the whole objective work of Christ, we see that the experience appropriate to it is one that covers the whole of the Christian life, and this is what is meant by regeneration in its wide and comprehensive Biblical sense (*ib.*). Candlish points out that " the theory that assigns a direct and causal efficacy to the outward rite has often led to a restriction of the meaning of it, so as to make this theory more consistent with experience " (*The Christian Salvation*, p. 150). By returning to an interpretation of Baptism in terms of *its objective reality in Christ Himself*, and therefore in terms of the fulness of the Gospel of what God has already done for us in Christ, Candlish does not assert that Baptism has any efficacy other than that which has already been accomplished in Christ, and does not therefore speak of " sacramental grace " as something other than, or in addition to, the objective reality of our salvation in Christ. In this way Candlish delivers Baptism from the narrow and restricted meaning given to it by Romanists, Federalists, and others who define its significance by what they believe it can effect within the child at the moment of its administration.

At the same time Candlish recovers the true meaning of the term " exhibit " as used by the Reformers and the Westminster divines : it denotes " not merely showing but bestowing or applying " (*The Sacraments*, p. 39 ; *The Christian Salvation*, p. 150 f.).

Again, because the efficacy of grace is not separable from Christ Himself, Candlish does not fall into the net of semi-Pelagianism. Christ actually fulfils what He promises, since He who gives the pledge is the Amen, the faithful and true witness, who cannot lie or deceive. Faith is required, but " it is the work of God's Spirit and not of our own free will to apply to us the benefits purchased by Christ " (*The Christian Salvation*, p. 152). Thus the sovereignty of God's grace is remarkably represented in Baptism, in which we are passive subjects (*ib.*, p. 142). Baptism also requires and demands obedience and holy resolve on our part, but " this aspect of Baptism, though real and important, is in its nature posterior and subordinate to the other. It is first and chiefly a pledge or token *on the part of God in Christ to us* ; and only secondarily, though not less really, a pledge or token on our part of our allegiance to God " (*The Sacraments*, p. 62 f.).

(iv) Infant Baptism

According to Candlish, objection to infant Baptism " rests upon *the erroneous assumption that Baptism is a sign and seal of the personal salvation of those* who receive it " (*op. cit.*, p. 67). His defence of infant Baptism can be summarized thus : (*a*) " There is nothing symbolized in it of which infants are not capable. It represents that part of the application of redemption in which man is passive, namely, regeneration, and not that in which he is active, namely, faith and repentance. Now infants are capable of regeneration " (*The Christian Salvation*, p. 163). This does not, of course, mean that Candlish taught what is commonly known as " baptismal regeneration "—*viz.*, that the act of baptizing causes regeneration through conferring sacramental grace. Candlish's essentially Biblical understanding makes such a notion impossible for him (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 169 ff.). (*b*) " God's Covenant with His people ever included children as well as themselves ; and He has given special promises that if parents, believing in Christ and walking with God in Him, faithfully and prayerfully bring up their children, they too will be regenerated by the Spirit (Prov. xxii. 6 ; Is. xliv. 3 : 5 ; Eph. vi. 4) " (*ib.*). Such promises are not to be so interpreted as though they limited the sovereign and free grace of God, who has mercy on whom He will. (*c*) " He reaffirms the statement of the *Westminster Confession* that " the efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is ministered."

(D) THE TENSION BETWEEN REFORMATION AND FEDERAL THEOLOGY

Candlish's understanding of Baptism can be fairly summed up by saying that it is the sacrament of God's Fatherly *adoption* of us into sonship in and through Jesus Christ. In this he was influenced by his father, Principal R. S. Candlish of New College, Edinburgh, who had sought to formulate a better doctrine of adoption because, as he declared, the statements on this subject in the *Westminster Confession* and Catechisms were " by no means satisfactory " (*The Fatherhood of God*, 5th edit., p. 194).

As Thomas Boston, more than a century earlier, working within the framework of the Federal Theology, had sought to restore to its full place the whole concept of union with Christ, so R. S. Candlish, also working within the forensic thought of the Federal scheme, sought to recover the Biblical teaching of adoption into a filial relation with the Father through participation in the incarnate sonship of the eternal Son. This involved restoring the doctrine of the Incarnation to a central place in theology which it had lost in the forensic scheme.

Christ was God's Son not only in His divine nature but also in His human nature, which He assumed for us, and in which He lived out a life of perfect obedience to the Father. By being given to share in His human nature, we are brought into a sonship which is the essence and goal of the Christian life. This sharing in Christ's sonship involves a close analogical relation between our new birth in Christ and His miraculous birth into our humanity. By His birth a new humanity was born, in which, through the operation of the Spirit, we are given to share.

R. S. Candlish was attacked by Professor Crawford of the University Faculty in Edinburgh, who taught that there is a universal Fatherhood of God and a universal sonship prior to " evangelical sonship." Crawford had no difficulty in finding support for his arguments in the writings of William Cunningham (1805-1861) who had already attacked Calvin because, in his teaching on the Lord's Supper, he had sought to show " a real influence exerted by Christ's human nature upon the souls of believers " (Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, p. 240). As a Federal theologian, committed to a purely forensic conception of atonement and justification, Cunningham was unable to acknowledge the saving significance of the humanity of Christ, and therefore the intrinsic importance of union with Christ in His human nature. All that a Federal theologian can consistently bring himself to say is that " in union with God's own Son as a public person in His office as Mediator, an honorary standing of sonship that is inamissible is conferred on those for whom the way to this rank is opened in their acceptance as they are justified by the Blood of Christ and who are prepared for the life of sons by their New Birth and the sealing by the Spirit of the Son " (John MacLeod, *Scottish Theology*, p. 274).

Here is exposed the contradiction between the post-Westminster Calvinism, with its severely abstract and forensic categories, and the Calvinistic teaching of the Scottish Reformers. The same contradiction lies at the root of the present-day confusion in our Church with regard to Baptism. Nowhere is this clearer than in the work of the great James Denney. He abandoned the abstract schematism of the Federal theology with its impersonal conception of grace and unbiblical doctrine of a limited atonement, and gave the doctrine of the person and work of Christ paramount place once again. Under Ritschlian influence he replaced the abstract legal relationship by a moral one, and failed to appreciate the old doctrine of Robert Bruce (cf. his *Sermons on the Sacraments*) which was being reaffirmed by his colleague J. S. Candlish. In his commentary on Romans vi., Denney insists that " the requirements of the passage demand the idea of an actual union to, or incorporation in, Christ," and so, on

exegetical grounds, regrets the Federal interpretation which construes it in purely judicial terms (cf. 1958 Report, p. 60). When he came to work this out in relation to the sacraments, Denney frankly admitted that he was perplexed (*The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 314 ff.). His only way out was to give it a purely cognitive interpretation based upon the text, "Reckon yourselves dead unto sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." "Apart from this self-reckoning, which when real is simply faith's identification of itself with the Saviour, all this about union with the death and resurrection of Christ in Baptism is meaningless" (*ib.*, p. 317). In this interpretation Denney completely reversed the meaning of the Apostle, who commanded us to reckon ourselves to be dead in Christ and alive again because already and objectively we are so, in Christ, through what Christ has done on our behalf after assuming us into Himself. In contradiction to this Denney made the meaning of death and resurrection rest upon the subjective act of self-reckoning. This was precisely what Candlish had sought to show could not be done.

Denney was rightly concerned to teach a doctrine of Baptism that would give faith its full and proper place. "Baptism and faith are but the outside and inside of the same thing" (*The Death of Christ*, p. 185; *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 316). What he was unable to do was to find a way of stating St Paul's doctrine of union with Christ in Baptism which leaves full room for faith. The reason for this failure may well lie in the fact that under the influence of the Ritschlian theology Denney was still conceiving faith in intellectual and moral terms. Precisely at this point Denney's greatest pupil, the late William Manson, differed from his teacher, and took the side of Calvin, Bruce, the Candlishes, and H. R. Mackintosh.

(e) Church Practice

There can be little doubt that for many ministers, at least towards the end of the nineteenth and in the first decades of the twentieth centuries, Baptism was little more than "a visible sermon," whose real purpose was to be an *educational pledge* on the part of the parents and the congregation. The idea that Baptism is essentially an ordinance of the Gospel was in abeyance, but there was an attempt to recover a fuller and more adequate understanding of Baptism in view of Socinian and Baptist attacks upon it. An example of this is the tract on *Infant Baptism* by James Lumsden, published by the Free Presbytery of Arbroath in 1856. This shows the influence of the Catechisms of Geneva and Heidelberg as well as the Westminster ones, and also that of Calvin's *Institutes* and of Robert Bruce's *Sermons on the Sacraments* which Cunningham had recently republished.

Baptism was regarded by Lumsden not only as signing and sealing but as actually applying Christ and His benefits to the child. This is done not only through the parents but directly through the work of the Spirit in the life and growth of the child after Baptism. In accordance with the requirements of the Federal Theology, the evangelical offer in Baptism is regarded as made only "conditionally" and "hypothetically."

The persistence of this latter element made a somewhat superficial view of the sacrament inevitable. This may be seen in the first Service Books issued in the Free Church under the convenership of Dr D. Bannerman, the son of Professor James Bannerman: *A New Directory for the Public Worship of God* (1898) and *Directory and Forms for Public Worship* (1909). These books lay the emphasis not so much on the divine action in Baptism as on the act of the parents in presenting and dedicating the child, and the act of the congregation in receiving him into membership of the Church. The prayers in these books are better than their formal

statements of doctrine, and show the Father-child relationship prevailing over the abstract Federal relationship—an indication that the worshipping and praying Church is often better than its theology.

In the *Book of Common Order, 1928*, issued by the U.F. Church under the convenership of Dr Millar Patrick, who stood in the tradition of the younger Bannerman, there is a still closer approximation to the classical Service Books of the Church of Scotland. Baptism is the divine ordinance which declares to us that God our Father, who has redeemed us by the sacrifice of Christ, is also the God and Father of our children. It is only in the prayers that God's direct action towards the child is mentioned. Elsewhere, instead of speaking directly of the relation of the child to Christ and His work, it says that the children belong, with us who believe, to the membership of the Church through the covenant made in Christ, and confirmed to *us* by God in this sacrament, which is a sign and seal of *our* cleansing, of *our* ingrafting into Christ, and of *our* welcome in the household of God.

In the order for the administration of Holy Baptism to adults, washing and engrafting and regeneration are applied directly to the baptized, but this is interpreted as a mutual act in which God grants him assurance in the sacrament while *he seals* his covenant with God. Thus none of the teaching of James Candlish seems to have been carried over into the form of administration of Baptism. It should be remembered, however, that this Service Book was a product of the Liberal reaction after the First World War, when Reformed theology was at its lowest ebb in Scotland. Nevertheless the Reformed and evangelical theology of the Free Church continued to exercise a wide influence through the teaching of men like H. R. Mackintosh, and this eventually bore fruit in more adequate doctrine such as we see in the late D. M. Baillie's *Theology of the Sacraments* (1957).

4. THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND TRADITION

The general tendencies in the Established Church are not so easy to describe, but three distinct lines of tradition are discernible : (1) A strong core of the old evangelical tradition remained. This combined the evangelical and sacramental emphases and developed more and more in a Biblical direction. Among its most notable men may be mentioned Daniel Dewar and William Milligan. (2) There was a revival of Westminster Calvinism tending, as in the eighteenth century, to break into two strands—a hyper-Calvinism and a modified Calvinism—each showing a strong strand of rationalism. In this tradition Baptism was given a severely cognitive interpretation corresponding to a highly intellectualist conception of faith. (3) There was also, after the Disruption, a considerable revival of High Church Calvinism. The movement appears to have two main emphases : a return to Calvin's emphasis upon the sovereignty of the divine Word and Act, calling forth man's response in gratitude and praise, and a view of the means of grace, more Augustinian and Mediæval than Reformed, under the influence of the Tractarians and of the Church historians. There resulted from this a strong Calvinist tradition, consciously depending on Knox's *Book of Common Order* and the *Westminster Directory*, with a more adequate doctrine of Baptism and an evangelical view of the *act of God* closely akin to the Secession and U.P. tradition. Unfortunately it operated with a conception of grace as something that can be channelled through the ordinances of the Church, but it largely avoided the semi-Pelagianism of the Federal Theology as well as the " baptismal regeneration " of the Tractarians.

(A) Principal Dewar

Principal Dewar of Aberdeen represents the more evangelical tradition. His teaching is found in the third volume of his *Elements of Systematic Divinity* (1866). For Dewar, Baptism is essentially " the rite that accompanies the exhibition of the blessings of the Gospel and is an authoritative sign on the part of God " (p. 266). He did not work with a general conception of what is sacramental and then seek to apply it to the two evangelical ordinances. He dealt directly with Baptism and the Lord's Supper as presented in the Biblical teaching. In discussing the history of the doctrine, Dewar offers an interpretation of the teaching of Augustine, citing two important passages with which he is in agreement : " The washing of regeneration is indeed common to all who are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost ; but the grace of regeneration, of which these are the sacraments or signs, by which the members of Christ's body are regenerated with their head, is not common to all ; for heretics and false brethren, in the communion of the Catholic name, have the same Baptism as ourselves " (*Enarr. in Ps.*, lxxvii.). " It is clearly shown that the sacrament of Baptism is one thing, and the conversion of the heart another. Nor, if one of these be wanting, are we to conclude that the other is also wanting ; because there may be Baptism without conversion, while in the malefactor on the cross, without doubt there was conversion without Baptism. Baptism may exist where conversion of heart is not, and conversion of heart may be where Baptism is not " (*De Bap.* iv. 25).

Dewar connects Baptism in the Biblical and Reformed manner with the covenant, although the forensic interpretation is not to the fore. By nature and design Baptism is a seal on God's part of the blessing of the Gospel in cleansing and regeneration, but " it is the truth of God, and not Baptism, which is the instrumental cause of regeneration " (p. 228 f.). " Viewed as this divine pledge of the truth and love of God, it implies that the blessings exhibited will be really communicated to all who sincerely lay hold of the covenant."

The nature and design of Baptism is then expounded under five heads :—

(i) " Baptism is designed as an emblem to be significant of the purification by the blood and the Spirit of Christ " (p. 230).
(ii) " Baptism is designed as a public badge of the Christian profession " (p. 231).
(iii) " Baptism is designed to represent our union with Christ " (Galatians iii. 27 ; Romans vi. 4-6, p. 232).
(iv) " Baptism when administered to infants, is designed to show that they are capable of being subjects of Christ's Kingdom, and of partaking of its blessings " (*ib.*).
(v) " It is forcibly calculated to teach that the salvation of man is altogether of grace " (p. 234).

Dewar's teaching, though never very profound, performed a valuable service in seeking a better Biblical basis for the traditional teaching, and in modifying its hard judicial character. This was carried further by William Milligan, whose careful exegesis of the New Testament brought him much nearer a proper emphasis upon the grace of God in Christ Jesus. He taught that the ground of our confidence is found directly in the divine revelation, and in God's great acts of mercy towards us, and " not in any process of reasoning on our part or any exercise of feeling by which we respond to the great acts of God's mercy towards us." This is the very truth that the sacraments are designed to inculcate. " In them, according

to the teaching of the New Testament and of the Standards of the Scottish Church, Christ comes to us as much as we to Him. In them He is by His own appointment 'represented, sealed, applied to believers.' They are channels of His grace so that, when we seek for assurance of salvation, we are to find it in what He does for us, and not in any inward persuasion of our own that we have accepted Him. Such a persuasion enthusiastic or presumptuous persons easily find, and are too frequently puffed up; the modest miss, and are too frequently thrown into despair. Christ Himself is with and in His sacraments, to make them not only a sign but a seal to us of 'ingrafting into Christ, of remission of sins by His blood, and regeneration by His Spirit, of adoption and resurrection unto eternal life' " (*Larger Catechism*, Q. 165) (*The Ascension of our Lord*, p. 348).

(B) THOMAS J. CRAWFORD

For the Federal and rational tradition we cite as representative Professor Thomas J. Crawford of Edinburgh University, the opponent of Principal R. S. Candlish. For him Baptism is the sacramental representation of God's paternal kindness, which is extended to us only on the conditions, limitations, and requirements of the Federal contract. Here once again we have the legalism and the limitation of the sovereignty of grace against which the Reformed evangelical tradition in the Church has consistently protested. An example of Crawford's position is the following: "It is true that all persons who make a credible profession of Christianity are entitled to the sacraments, in the judgment of the visible Church. And in regard to Baptism, the infants of professed believers share in this respect in the outward privileges of their parents. But whether they be entitled to the sacraments in the judgment of the Head of the Church is altogether a different question. If He does not recognize them as being already, or as destined ultimately to become, sincere believers, then they have no real interest, either present or prospective, in the covenant of grace. And accordingly the sacraments, though in due form administered to them, are, like seals attached to a blank sheet of parchment, of no significance and validity whatsoever" (*The Fatherhood of God*, p. 261).

Crawford's view of Baptism has two very unfortunate implications: (*a*) It makes the mercy of the visible Church much wider than the mercy of Christ, and (*b*) it makes the real content of Baptism what we ultimately put into it, for everthing depends upon the fact that we fill in the blank parchment. Both of these are very far removed from the Good News of the Gospel.

Crawford has another side to his teaching which he draws from the baptismal prayer in the *Westminster Directory*. This leads him to expound Baptism as essentially "of the nature of a prayer that God would have respect unto that covenant which is sealed by it in behalf of the child to whom it is administered" (p. 263). The idea that Baptism is to be regarded as an act of prayer goes right back to the catechisms of Craig and Calvin. In this light, Crawford gives Baptism a more adequate interpretation. "What is it that is done when a person is baptized? One of Christ's ministers, acting by His authority, in the presence and with the concurrence of a Christian assemblage, applies to the baptized person the appointed seal of the evangelical promises, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The three persons of the Godhead are here solemnly invoked to confer on the recipient of the ordinance the blessings represented by it; and, apart from such invocations, the accompanying *action*, whereby the appointed token of the covenant is applied, is nothing less than a *symbolic prayer*. Hence in baptizing a person we are virtually praying that God would confer upon him the spiritual blessings of which his Baptism is significant. . . . It is much to be regretted that the extreme jealousy

felt among us of anything like the notion of an *opus operatum* in this sacrament should have disposed many to fall into the opposite error of wellnigh denying any efficacy to Baptism, as a means of imparting spiritual benefits to those who receive it, and of regarding it in no higher light than that of a mere form of admission into the visible Church. The prevalence of such low views of the efficacy of Baptism is one of the greatest obstacles in the way of its proving efficacious" (p. 263 f.). The real reason why people were so liable to fall into such poor views of the sacrament is that they had been taught by theologians like Crawford that its efficacy depended on themselves, and on their views of it, or what they put into it—all in strange contradiction to the baptismal prayer itself.

Crawford's teaching, in a more evangelical and acceptable form, is found in W. P. Paterson (*The Rule of Faith*, p. 275 ff.). Paterson's discussion reveals that one of the inherent weaknesses of Protestant scholasticism was that it tended to form its doctrine in reaction to the sacramental doctrine of Rome. Hence "it affirmed the efficacy of the sacraments to be conditioned by the spiritual state of the recipient" (p. 277). The question how this can be applied to infant Baptism, Paterson answers by interpreting the Reformed view that children are to be baptized because they are within the covenant in such a way as to suggest that "the faith of the Church or of the parents might be vicariously accepted as a ground of blessing" (*ib.*). But is not this a form of the Roman doctrine of 'implicit faith'? The true view is that infants are baptized on the ground of Christ's own faith and faithfulness. It is He, and He alone, not the Church nor the parents, who stands in for the child in a vicarious relationship.

(c) Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick

The High Church Calvinist movement is well represented by *A Manual of Church Doctrine*, by H. J. Wotherspoon and J. M. Kirkpatrick, the teaching of which we now summarize :—

(i) What a sacrament is

Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick work with the Westminster definition of the sacraments, but they relate it to the *fulfilled* covenant in Christ, that is they relate it directly to the *Incarnation*. The sacraments are ordinances appointed for the application of redemption by the Spirit of Christ. "The sacraments result from the fact that salvation operates by Incarnation; and they import that our relation to Christ is a vital relation, embracing our whole nature, bodily as well as spiritual" (p. 26).

(ii) Christ is the Minister

"The true Minister of the sacraments is Christ—*i.e.*, the action in each sacrament is proper to Christ alone. None but He can wash away sin, or can give the Holy Spirit, or instil life. It is proper to Himself to show His own death for us. He alone can give Himself for our food. The commissioned Ministry acts in His Name and on His behalf; as the Baptist was nothing but only a Voice, so they are but a hand by which the Lord from Heaven carries out His proper work among us. The Ministry has the *authority* to minister: the *power* is in Christ" (p. 34).

(iii) The necessity of faith

Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick join with the whole Scottish tradition in repudiating anything like an *ex opere operato* conception of sacramental efficacy. The sacraments are not effective by the mere fact of their having been performed. "Except to faith they are nothing, and except to the spiritual man they are little. . . . Faith is thrown entirely upon Him"

—*i.e.*, the Holy Spirit—"to find anything at all in sacraments. They are nothing in the world except what He makes them; they contain nothing unless what is by Him imported into them. The soul coming to the sacraments is *compelled* to look through their apparatus of 'sensible sign' (as one looks through, and not at, the glass of a window) to Christ and His benefits, and to the operation of the Holy Ghost as He follows Christ's word" (p. 36). "To come without faith to a sacrament is not to come to the sacrament, but only to come in a bodily way to the outward part of the sacrament. In such a case, the spiritual part is there, and is offered —in a sense (so far as the divine faithfulness is involved) is bestowed, BUT IT IS NOT RECEIVED—the spiritual in the man is not accessible to the spiritual in the sacrament" (p. 37).

(iv) What Baptism is

As a sacrament, Baptism "has two parts, an outward and visible sign and a corresponding operation of grace. It signifies and seals; but it also *applies* what it signifies. The outward part of this sacrament is washing with water in the Name of the Holy Trinity (*Conf. of Faith*, xxviii. 2). The inward part is 'engrafting' into Christ, regeneration, remission of sins, and giving up unto God (*Conf. of Faith*, xxviii. 1; *L. Cat.*, 165; *Directory*, 'Exhortation'). It is not merely for the admission of the person baptized into the visible Church: Baptism is 'into Christ' (*Conf. of Faith*, xxviii. 1). Baptism has efficacy (*Conf. of Faith*, xxviii. 6). It not only 'offers,' but in it the Holy Ghost really 'exhibits' (*i.e.*, applies) and confers the promised grace" (*ib.*) (p. 39 f.).

(v) Baptism is the act of God

"In Baptism the baptized person does nothing, but only surrenders himself to a Divine operation. True, he comes with confession of faith, renunciation of hindrance, and promise of fidelity. But these are not parts of Baptism; they are conditions of Baptism—steps in the way to it. In Baptism itself the baptized is passive; so much so that the Scripture compares it to the act of dying, as the extreme instance of passive yielding into God's hands; or even compares it to the burial of the dead (Rom. vi. 3-5; Col. ii. 12). When, therefore, Scripture speaks of this or that as done in Baptism, it is the act of God of which it speaks, not the subsequent response of man to that act. On the Divine side all is real and complete. God does for us whatever is needful for our being put into a state of grace. Of that we can speak confidently. There is not Yea and Nay with God (II. Cor. i. 20). The contents attributed to Baptism are all of them acts of God: *He* engrafts; *He* regenerates; *He* remits sin; *He* calls and 'engages' us to be the Lord's. God does it, and it is done. But nothing is asserted as to our acceptance or use of this grace, nor of our answer to this calling. We ought in answer to repent, to believe, to turn to God with all our heart, to hold to Christ and to grow up into Him. But Baptism does not ensure our doing of any of these things. It only calls for them and makes them possible. No one speaks of baptismal repentance or of baptismal conversion, for repenting and turning to God are actions which God gives us to do, not things that God does for us. Grace may be received in vain. What is grafted may wither. What is generated may not come to birth. What is born may die. The forgiven may go on to sin. The son may prove prodigal and go from his father's house. Yet the grafting, the generating, the birth, the adoption took place. What, then, we say of Baptism and its effect we do not say of man's response to grace, which is uncertain, but of God's grace, which is sure. Much is true of Baptism which may not be true of each baptized person" (p. 40 ff.).

(vi) Baptism and *change of status*

" The comparisons used in Scripture to explain the operations of Baptism are such as engrafting (Rom. xi. 17-19), building (I. Pet. ii. 5 ; I. Cor. iii. 9), adoption (Gal. iv. 5 ; Eph. i. 5), or naturalization " (Eph. ii. 12-13 ; Phil. iii. 20) (p. 42 f.). For Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick the one idea behind all these comparisons is ' change of status,' and this change of status involves " a new birth : and the act of God in according it is compared to an act of spiritual generation " (John iii. 5 ; Tit. iii. 5) (p. 45). By this term ' generation ' Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick refer to the generating of response on our part to the great redemptive acts. It is a response which derives from the grace of God ; for without His grace we can do nothing at all. It refers to the divine ' calling and election ' or the action of God's Spirit upon the soul, bringing and enabling it to respond. This is what, in the old Augustinian terminology, was known as ' prevenient grace.' In Baptism, therefore, the child is introduced " into the sphere of the Spirit's grace and operation " which constitutes for him a " real opportunity."

(vii) The subjects of Baptism

Children are the ideal subjects of Baptism. " Our Lord has taught us (Matt. xix. 14) that the little child is the ideal citizen of that Kingdom — ' of such ' it consists ; and it receives them, for in seal of His words Christ took children into His arms and blessed them -and they were blessed. So far from the children being required to depart until they shall become adult sinners, our Lord taught that the adult must become as the little child in order to come into the Kingdom. It was in the course of the invitation to Baptism (Acts ii. 39) that St Peter said ' the promise is unto you and to your children.'

" . . . In the child there is no resistance. . . . In the Baptism of an adult there must always be present a certain fear lest ' he have neither part nor lot in that matter ' (Acts viii. 21)—God alone knows the heart ; but in the Baptism of a little child, thanksgiving may be unshadowed, confident. For we know what God has therein done. The rest is still uncertain—we cannot foresee whether this soul will ' work out its salvation ' or ' make its calling and election sure ' ; but we have good hope of it through grace " (p. 47 ff.).

(viii) The sequel of Baptism

" Baptism is a complete sacrament : on God's side it ensures to the baptized ' all things that pertain to life and godliness.' But it calls for our response—' a covenant is not of one ' ; on our side we must own and embrace its gift and obligation. While this is true in all cases, it is of course the more obviously necessary where Baptism has been received in infancy. The relation constituted by Baptism then requires to be completed, on the part of the baptized, by conscious acceptance of its status ; and, on the part of the Church, by . . . examination and preparation . . ., and that formal act by which full consequence is given to the earlier act of their admission into His flock. At this stage of the Christian Life we should not only look forward to the Lord's Table and all that participation therein implies, but should first and foremost look back to Baptism, and desire to perfect what concerns that, by the open confession of Christ before God and man, and by securing from the Church recognition and confirmation in the place which Baptism bestows " (p. 55 f.).

(D) Church Practice

The Service Books produced in the early part of the nineteenth century, before and after the Disruption, embodying the current teaching of the

Church, all reflect the rationalized form of Federal theology held by the moderate Churchmen. But in 1861 Robert Lee of Greyfriars, Edinburgh, published his *Prayers for Social and Public Worship*, which was mildly liturgical in form, and embodied the outlook of the broad-Churchmen. In seeking a more liturgical form Lee went back to the prayers of the *Westminster Directory*, and thus reintroduced, not only in form but in content, elements of a more adequate doctrine. The 4th edition of Lee's book, called *The Order of Public Worship and the Administration of the Sacraments*, in its order for Baptism heavily depends upon John Knox's *Book of Common Order*, which had been regularly used until 1647, and which inspired the reconstitution of worship in the restored Presbyterianism of 1690. Lee reintroduced into the service the question put by Knox : " Do you here present this child to be baptized, desiring that he may be engrafted into the mystical body of Jesus Christ ? "

The Church Service Society in *Euchologion* (1867) introduced still more of the teaching and language of Knox into the baptismal service. The second edition of this book, however, despite its new title, *A Book of Common Order* (1869), conformed less to Knox's pattern and more to that of the *Westminster Directory*. The question put at Baptism was altered to read : " Do you present this child to God in the holy sacrament of Baptism ? " and one form of instruction ran as follows : " This sacrament thus instituted is a holy sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of our ingrafting into Christ and union with Him, of remission of sins, regeneration, adoption and life eternal. This element of water representeth both the blood of Christ, which taketh away all the guilt of sin, and the power of the Holy Ghost in regenerating and sanctifying our corrupt nature. And as by Baptism we are solemnly received into the Church, we are taught, and acknowledge thereby, that all men are born in sin, and must be cleansed by Christ's blood and Spirit if they would be accepted of God and admitted to His heavenly kingdom. The Baptism of water cannot of itself effect that which it signifies, but as it is a sign appointed by divine wisdom to show us our need of heavenly cleansing, so it is also a seal whereby God confirms to all who are baptized His promise to bestow it ; assuring them thereby of His goodwill and love, ingrafting them into the body of Christ, receiving them into His household, and giving them a covenant right to look to Him as their Father, and to expect through faith all the blessings of salvation." These words, drawn from the old language of the Reformation and Westminster documents, represent a remarkable combination of those two traditions that belong to the foundation and substance of the whole Church of Scotland. The teaching and the form contained in this order for the administration of Baptism remained substantially the same for the remaining editions, but it is worth noting that, in spite of the introduction of certain ' Anglican ' elements in the sixth edition (against the protests of Sprott, Leishman, and others), the conception of grace as something that can be channelled through the ordinances of the Church tended to disappear, and is much less evident than in the writings of some of the theologians, in the Free Church as well as in the Church of Scotland.

Altogether the *Euchologion* or *A Book of Common Order* went through ten editions and sold over twenty thousand copies within fifty years, which indicates the measure of its use and influence in the Church of Scotland. This may also explain why the Church itself was so late in producing its own Service Book, *Prayers for Divine Service*, authorized by the General Assembly in 1923. Along with the *Book of Common Order, 1928*, of the United Free Church, this reflects the influence of the more superficial liberal theology of the post-war period. While the language of the *Larger Catechism* describing Baptism is carried over in the preamble, and the language of the *Directory of Public Worship* is reflected in the prayers, the

emphasis falls upon Baptism as an act of dedication—*i.e.*, upon an *act of man* towards God rather than upon God's seal of His own act of love and grace towards man. The Apostles' Creed is used, as it had been in both the Reformation and Westminster traditions (until it tended to be dropped out during the period of Episcopalian predominance in the late seventeenth century). The part of the service closest to the Reformation tradition is found in the prayer after Baptism: "We give Thee most hearty thanks and praise, most merciful Father, that Thou hast been pleased to receive *this child* into Thy Church; and we beseech Thee that *he*, being ingrafted into Christ the true Vine, may receive out of His fulness and evermore abide in Him. Like the Holy Child, may he grow in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. Suffer him not at any time to fall away from Thee, but grant that, being brought up with faithful Christian training, he may embrace Christ as his Saviour, and that with true and earnest faith he may take upon himself the vows now taken in his name, and come to His holy Table. Grant that he may witness a good confession, that he may be of use to Thy Church and in the world, and that, persevering unto the end, he may obtain the full victory of faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

5. THE REUNITED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

During the last four hundred years the Church has again and again turned back to the teaching of the Reformers and to that of the Westminster Standards when seeking to clarify its mind and build itself up in the faith. This clearly happened when Presbyterianism was restored in 1690, but it also happened during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the last hundred years exhaustive study has been given to doctrine and worship in the Reformation and post-Reformation eras. This was done at a time of unparalleled activity in historical and Biblical studies. The result was to drive the Church, in all its branches, steadily back upon the basic doctrines. This has been even more marked since the reunion of 1929. The coming together of the different branches of the Church has led to a searching of their various traditions, an examination of them in the light of Biblical studies, and a bringing together of their permanent contributions in the light of the Reformed Faith. The result is that the Church of Scotland is growing steadily in its fresh understanding of the historic doctrines of the faith, and of the place of worship and mission in the redeemed life of the people of God.

In the *Book of Common Order* (1940) we see a gathering together of the various strands of our Scottish tradition: the theological teaching of men like J. S. Candlish and H. R. Mackintosh from the Free Church side, the theological emphasis upon worship of men like H. J. Wotherspoon and J. M. Kirkpatrick from the Established Church, the Christological emphases of the Secession tradition, the missionary orientation of men in each part of the divided Church, and not least the Biblical theology of men like William Milligan, A. B. Davidson, James Denney, H. A. A. Kennedy, and William Manson.

While forward steps have been taken in the sphere of worship, the old tensions (*a*) between the Christological theology of our Reformers and the forensic tendencies of the Westminster divines, and (*b*) between hyper-Calvinists and semi-Pelagian moralists, are still with us. The most clearly marked division is that between those who value the richness of our Reformation tradition and those who still retain the attitudes of the late eighteenth century and the nineteenth century. Many of the latter have not themselves had the Biblical, doctrinal, and catechetical teaching of earlier times;

they are more concerned with " religion " than with the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, and are more interested in Church organizations than in prayer and public worship. Yet this situation is changing. There are to-day signs of a real hunger for Biblical teaching, for doctrinal substance, for informed worship, and for instructed evangelism. As a result of this the old tensions are again appearing, and it is unfortunate that the only tools which many people have with which to interpret what is set before them are superficial humanistic and moralistic ideas derived from the Renaissance rather than from the Reformation.

It is in this setting that the sacraments have come under inquiry. James Denney once said, " Both the sacraments are forms into which we may put as much of the Gospel as they will carry, and St Paul, for his part, practically puts the whole of his Gospel into each " (*The Death of Christ*, p. 137). It is in the sacraments that worship, doctrine, action, and evangelism all converge. It is therefore natural that the tensions in Scottish Church history should be so acute at this focal point. This means that the problems raised for us to-day by the sacraments can only be answered through a deeper understanding of the Gospel, for it is in the Gospel, and not in themselves that the sacraments have their meaning. It is in Christ that the sacraments have their substance. Only through the evangelical doctrines of Christ's Incarnation and Atonement can we resolve our tensions, and set forth a true and faithful doctrine of Baptism adequate to guide our worship, instruction, and evangelism.

III. THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND AND BAPTIST TEACHING

The Declaration of Principle in the Constitution of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland states the basis of that union to be :—

" (1) That the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty to interpret and administer His Laws.

(2) That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, of those who have professed repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who ' died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and rose again in the third day.'

(3) That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelization of the world."

(Quoted in H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Life and Faith of the Baptists*, p. 90 f.)

Like the Church of Scotland, the Baptists look to Scripture for the supreme rule of faith and life, and speak of " the supremacy of the New Testament in all matters of the Church's faith " (H. Cook, *What Baptists Stand For*, p. 13). This Commission has already given careful study to the relevant Biblical material. For the detailed discussion reference should be made to the revised form of the Commission's 1955 Report, now published under the title, *The Biblical Doctrine of Baptism*.

A second point arising from paragraph (1) of the Declaration quoted above must be noted. This relates to the liberty of each Church. Baptists hold to " the principle of the freedom of the individual Church under

Christ " (Reply to the Lambeth Appeal by Baptist Union, 1926. Printed in H. Cook, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-181). The Baptist Union, through its Assembly, could come to a majority decision, but this would not be binding upon the individual Churches that make up the Union. There is no single universally binding expression of the Baptist standpoint. Indeed the act of " Baptism by immersion takes the place amongst Baptists of a formal Creed " (H. Wheeler Robinson, *Baptist Principles*, p. 29). Thus, while Baptist literature is immense and in some ways repetitive (Wheeler Robinson, *The Life and Faith of the Baptists*, p. 8), it also contains a great variety of opinions, not a few of which are at variance with one another. Some instances of this may be noted :

While paragraph (2) of the Declaration refers to immersion, and some would hold this to be essential, it was in fact affusion which was practised by the first English Baptists, and " anyone who thinks that Baptists then or now are primarily contending for the mode of immersion, does not really know what their faith is " (H. Wheeler Robinson, *Life and Faith*, p. 4).

Some Baptists practise " closed " Church membership and " closed " communion, others practise " open " membership and " open " communion, and others again " closed " membership but " open " communion, so that people may be welcomed to sit at the Lord's Table who would be refused membership in the Church (H. Wheeler Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 119 f. ; E. A. Payne, *Fellowship of Believers*, p, 74).

Yet again there have been differences in the practice of Baptist Churches with regard to the infants and young children of their members. There has been an " increasing introduction of ' Dedication Services ' in connexion with the Church " (H. Wheeler Robinson, *Life and Faith*, p. 89). Thus, having deprived the children of believers of what we regard as their Biblical due of Baptism, many Baptists have come to replace this with services " at which infants are presented, the duties, privileges and responsibilities of parents emphasized, and the prayers of the Church offered for children and parents " (Reply to Lambeth Appeal). Other Baptists deny that there is any Biblical warrant for this practice, and assert that " a child cannot be dedicated to God's service until the child is old enough to dedicate itself " (Stalker).

Behind these and other divergencies of view there is, of course, a very substantial agreement among Baptists ; and we can acknowledge also an area of agreement with the Church of Scotland. We could not find serious fault with such a statement as this, as far as it goes :—

> Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, or dipped, a sign of our entrance into the covenant of grace, and ingrafting into the body of Christ, which is His Church ; and of remission of sin in the blood of Christ, and of our fellowship in His death and resurrection, and of our living, or rising to newness of life.
>
> (Article xxviii., *The Doctrine of Baptism.* Baptist World Alliance, 1951, reaffirming the Baptist Articles of 1678.)

The influence of the *Westminster Confession*, to which this statement approximates closely, was widespread, especially amongst the Particular Baptists, and often, except where congregational independence, or believer's Baptism were involved, Baptist variations from it were " mainly verbal " (E. A. Payne, *op. cit.*, pp. 25 f., 64). Nevertheless certain very fundamental differences are present. It is not to be supposed that we are in general agreement, *e.g.*, about the significance of the Baptism of adults, differing

only as to whether sufficient grounds can be adduced for extending Baptism to include infants. The nature of our divergence is more serious.

1. The Nature of the Church

While their teaching and practice as regards Baptism have given the Baptists their name, it is in fact not upon the nature of Baptism but upon the nature of the Church that their fundamental difference from the Church of Scotland and other branches of the Catholic Church rests. This is clearly recognized by leading Baptists. "Baptism is not in fact primary; it is always derivative, and depends for its meaning on the conception of the Church which lies behind it" (H. Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 13). Cook also quotes the remark of W. T. Whitley: "The distinctive feature about the Baptists is their doctrine of the Church" (*ib.*). "Believers' Baptism . . . carries with it an unmistakable definition of the Church to which it is the door of entrance" (H. Wheeler Robinson, *Baptist Principles*, p. 25).

In reply to the Lambeth Appeal the Baptist Union said: "We believe in the Catholic Church as the holy society of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, which He founded" (Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 178). The same point is made by Wheeler Robinson: "The Church is a spiritual society composed of converted men who acknowledge the supreme Lordship of Christ" (*Baptist Principles*, p. 25); and by Cook himself: "The Church is a society of believers and of believers only, and entrance into it is conditioned by the free acceptance of God's grace in Christ" (*What Baptists Believe*, p. 39).

This view of the Church is defended on the ground that, just as Jesus inaugurated a New Covenant to take the place of the Old, so He created a New Israel, to supersede the one which had been rejected, and this New Israel was to be gathered upon a totally different principle from that upon which the Old Israel had been established. Men and women were no longer to be numbered in the *ecclesia* of God because of birth into a particular nation to which the promises of the covenant had been given. They now became members of the *ecclesia* solely by virtue of their personal faith in Jesus Christ, and their individual response to His call. Jesus' saying about the rock upon which His Church is to be built refers to this establishment of the Church upon a new principle, whereby it is the community of those only who have personal faith in Him (cf. Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 38).

It is often claimed by Baptists that there is an adumbration of this view of the Church in the Old Testament conception of the remnant, which is held to denote the company of true believers within the covenant people, sealed with the sign of circumcision (cf. H. Wheeler Robinson, *Life and Faith*, p. 12 f.). In this way the Baptists not only identify the Church with the remnant, but they turn the remnant into a *visible institution*, which is never done either in the Old Testament or the New Testament. In other words, the Baptists conceive it as "their duty to create a visible Church of perfect purity" (cf. H. Wheeler Robinson, *Baptist Principles*, p. 7): and this is done, not by defining the Church primarily by reference to Christ, and the sign of Baptism which He has given to seal the proclamation of what He has done, but rather by defining it with reference to those who claim to be born again, and to Baptism as the outward expression of this experience. In the Reformed tradition the Church is defined by a double reference. This is primarily to Christ and what He has done antecedent to our faith and experience, and secondarily to the faithful appropriation of the Gospel by believers. The Church is therefore recognized as having a double frontier, marked out by the two sacraments: Baptism being the sacramental sign and seal of what Christ has once and for all done for the Church, grounding it in Himself, and the Lord's Supper being the sacramental sign and seal of all who faithfully and continually

have communion with Him. Moreover the Reformed Church also acknowledges that there is still another reference by which the Church is to be defined, namely election. Therefore the Church has a third frontier, known only to God, and it is this frontier which defines what the Bible calls the remnant. In Baptist doctrine, however, there is a strong tendency to make believer's Baptism the sole frontier of the perfect visible Church, to be recognized by God and men, though they would not go so far as to say that Baptism is necessary for salvation.

2. The Rejection of Infant Baptism

This follows, not primarily as a deduction from the evidence of the New Testament, though this is adduced in its support, but chiefly as a consequence of the doctrine of the Church as restricted to the community of believers. Infants cannot belong to the Church, as so defined, though Baptists claim for them a place in what they call " the Christian community " (H. Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 42). Undoubtedly the Lord welcomed children and encouraged them to come, but He nowhere suggested that they were already by His reception of them made members of His Church, nor did He urge that they should be baptized. Hence to give them Baptism is to violate the inward coherence of the Gospel principle, and to make a sacrament of grace into something that savours of magic (H. Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 44). The New Covenant, unlike the Old Covenant, leaves the children outside. A pamphlet which had a large circulation in Scotland in the middle of last century asserted that children have no claim to religious ordinances, whether they have believing parents or not. A child of a savage, an idolater, a Muhammedan, or an infidel has as much right to Baptism as the child of the holiest man in the world (*The Origin, Claims and Antiquity of The Baptists*). The Reply to the Lambeth Appeal states : " In our judgement, the Baptism of infants incapable of offering a personal confession of faith subverts the conception of the Church as the fellowship of believers. We recognize that those of whom Jesus said, ' of such is the kingdom of heaven ' belong to God and no rite is needed to bring them into relation with Him " (Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 179). Other Baptists would add that the Gospel incident does not prove that children should be baptized, but rather that ' His kingdom is wider than His Church.' For the Commission's view of the correct interpretation of this passage reference should be made to *The Biblical Doctrine of Baptism*, p. 48 f.

3. Some Comments

The nature of the Church, as defined by the Baptists, necessarily excludes the Baptism of infants, but we cannot agree that this conception of the Church is in the Scriptures.

The New Testament does not separate the Church of the Old Testament from the Church of the New Testament, but regards the Church, whether " in the wilderness " (Acts vii. 38), or under the New Testament, as essentially the same Church of God. The difference made by Jesus was not a difference of foundation principles, but a fulfilment of what had hitherto been implicit. We cannot regard as Biblically adequate any interpretation which seems to drive a wedge between Old and New Testaments, making the former a repository of superseded ideas, and treating the Old Covenant and its sacraments as irrelevant for the understanding of the New Covenant (cf. *Westminster Confession*, xxvii. 5 ; *Scots Confession*, v. ; xvi.).

The Church in the New Testament is the fulfilment in Jesus Christ of the Church in the Old Testament—a more comprehensive fulfilment in that now the Gentiles also can become children of Abraham. But if the children of the covenant people, who were embraced by the Old Covenant,

are now to be excluded, and to be regarded as on a level with the children of unbelievers, the New Covenant would thereby be made less comprehensive than the Old, and the grace of God in it would be more restricted than in the Old.

We are bound to be suspicious of the claim to scriptural authority for any doctrine which makes Baptism less significant than circumcision. It can mean no less. The son of Jewish parents was at birth in a different relationship to God from the children of Gentiles. Of this difference his circumcision was the seal. It is no less true that when God to-day sends a child into the home of believing people, that child, from the first, stands in a different relation to God from the child of pagans. Both children are born into a world in which Jesus has already been incarnate, crucified, and raised from the dead, but they do not stand in precisely the same relation towards these great events, since the one child is linked up, through his believing parents, with this divine action and all that flows from it, in a way that is not true of the other child. The Biblical emphasis on family unity, expressed in the Old Testament by circumcision, and in the New Testament by infant Baptism, is set aside by the Baptists, for whom all relationships are reduced to terms of the individual and his conscious acts of cognition and volition.

With this emphasis upon rational self-consciousness, which characterizes the Baptist approach, and the definition of the Church in a way which necessarily excludes those who are not yet of an age to exercise such self-consciousness, original sin becomes a very difficult problem. Baptists often deny original guilt, and interpret original sin as an infection of evil picked up by the child after its birth. If original sin is taken seriously and the fiction of sin without guilt is repudiated, then the problem is acute. This has been well put by the Rev. G. J. M. Pearce in a recent number of *The Baptist Times* :—

> " If, accepting the doctrine of original sin, we believe that a child born into a sinful race is involved in its doom ; and if as Baptists, we also believe that salvation depends on God's grace received through personal faith, how do we regard the spiritual status of the child in the interval between his birth and his regeneration in Christ ? He is born into the world of sin and death, and not yet born again. If we take original sin seriously, he is in deadly peril ; but that we do not really believe.
>
> Perhaps the solution of the problem is that the grace of God working through Christian training in home, Sunday School, and public worship, counteracts the effects of original sin and predisposes him to personal faith. But it cannot reverse God's judgement, and it implies, moreover, that a child can receive some of the blessings of the Divine covenant through the faith of others rather than his own. Must we, after all, revise or abandon the doctrine of original sin ? It fits in well with infant Baptism, but it makes difficulties for Baptists. Could it be that infant Baptism, for all its errors, points to truth we have not noticed, or have neglected ? "
>
> (*The Baptist Times*, Aug. 28, 1958.)

In answer to this frank statement, three things may be said :—

(i) Baptists, who allow that original sin infects children right from birth, or even immediately after it, long before they have come to the age of responsibility or discretion, and who yet deny that God's grace can operate effectively towards them until they become " adult sinners," and can fully understand and personally appropriate it, are in the strange position of making God's grace less effective than original sin.

(ii) It is Christ Himself who stands in for the child. This is the real meaning of grace. He loved him, and died for him, and made him His own before the child was able to commit himself to Christ. It is therefore through " the faith of Jesus Christ " alone that God's blessings are bestowed upon the child ; it is therefore the faith or faithfulness of Christ alone which stands in any vicarious relation to the child, not the faith or faithfulness of the parents or of the Church.

(iii) Baptism is the sacrament of what Christ has already done for the child, antecedent to the rise of his faith, or to any possibility of response on his part, and hence Baptism is the seal He has attached to His Word, which declares and bestows His grace. It is not the seal of the subsequent experience of the receiver. It is precisely by making Baptism a sacrament of conscious inward experience rather than a sacrament of the Gospel that the Baptists create such insuperable problems for themselves.

4. The Nature of Believer's Baptism

If the Baptist claims as regards the nature of the Church and the part of the children of believers in it are un-scriptural, it is also open to question whether in fact the ceremony of adult Baptism, as used by Baptists, is wholly true to Biblical doctrine, or whether the atmosphere of rationalism and intellectualism which connects the Baptists with the Renaissance even more than with the Reformation, has not produced here also a shift of emphasis.

Part of the contribution of John the Baptist was that he made Baptism something *done to people*, in contrast to previous Baptisms which had been *done by them* ; and it is this which is the starting-point of New Testament Baptism. For Baptists, however, the emphasis remains largely pre-Johannine—concerned with Baptism still as something *done by the baptized*, though other aspects may at times be mentioned. It can on occasion go so far as to become self-Baptism, as in the case of the se-baptist John Smyth in 1609 (H. Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 94), but even where it does not reach to such extravagances, the stress is continually laid upon the human act, the human faith, the human centre of the rite.

The heads of instruction in the significance of the ordinance of Baptism given in the *Minister's Manual* are very illuminating. It is to be explained as :—

" (*a*) An act of obedience to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles :

(*b*) A distinctive act in which the believer openly confesses his faith in God, and his desire to give his life in the service of Christ who gave Himself for him :

(*c*) An act in which he joins himself to the company of all who, receiving God's grace in Christ have submitted themselves to His will :

(*d*) An imitation of Christ, Who, though He knew no sin, yet in Baptism made Himself one with them who sought to do the will of God, and was buried in the waters of the Jordan :

(*e*) The declaration, according with New Testament precept and practice, that the believer enters into new gifts of grace, since Baptism in water is an outward and visible sign and seal of the inward and invisible grace of Baptism into Jesus Christ :

(*f*) A declaration in symbol, for a believer's Baptism by immersion tells a story, that the candidate, being buried with Christ, has put away the life of sin and selfishness, renouncing ' the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all the covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh,' and has risen.

being born anew through God's regenerating power, to the life that is hidden with Christ in God, to keep His will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of his life."

(*A Minister's Manual*, arranged by M. F. Aubrey, with the co-operation in the 2nd edition of Dr F. Townley Lord and Dr Hugh Martin, p. 29 f.)

Explained in these terms, Baptism has become an almost completely man-centred act, in which the significant thing is what the believer does to make visible and external certain internal decisions and experiences of his own. No doubt for many Baptists this does not exhaust the meaning of the rite, and they would vehemently maintain that there is another side to it; yet this emphasis keeps occurring in Baptist literature, as such statements as the following indicate: "As we set forth His death in the Lord's Supper, so we should set forth our death, in and with Him, in the Act of Baptism" (F. B. Meyer, *Seven Reasons for Believer's Baptism*, p. 10 f.). "Baptism expresses . . . the believer's acceptance of all that is involved in Christ's death, burial and resurrection. . . . The believer personally identifies himself with Christ. . . . Baptism is the door by which the believer enters the Church, the society of those who have already pledged themselves. . . . The candidate is sustained by the prayers of those who count him as one of themselves" (H. Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 72 f.).

The man-centred emphasis is clear. Baptism under such conditions may well be a very solemn season of self-dedication, but is it in fact New Testament Baptism? We can hardly think so.

H. Wheeler Robinson has clearly recognized the difference in emphasis. After noting that the common element in Presbyterian, Anglican, and other interpretations is passivity—"it is throughout something done to, nothing done by the baptized"—he proceeds to contrast the Baptist position as "not simply a new phase of this succession of interpretations; it stands outside of them all as *the only Baptism which is strictly and primarily an ethical act on the part of the baptized*" (*Life and Faith*, p. 83). This may be an accurate statement of the Baptist rite as understood by many Baptists, but it is not an accurate description of Baptism as it appears in Scripture. It has indeed connexions with the New Testament sacrament, but it now appears, stripped of its New Testament significance, and transformed into an act of personal devotion and dedication in which it is the believer's thoughts, emotions and intentions which are the significant things. It may still be a sign of what man renders to God; it has ceased to be a seal of what God has bestowed upon man. The rite has lost its essential Christo-centric character, and the action of Christ in the sacrament has disappeared.

5. Redemption and Salvation

When thoughtful Baptists probe behind their disagreements with the other evangelical Churches in regard to believer's Baptism, they frequently have recourse to a sharp distinction between *redemption* and *salvation*. While *redemption* is held to refer to what has already taken place once for all, in the finished work of Christ, *salvation* is held to refer to the saving experience of the individual who appropriates redemption as it is offered to him in the preaching of the Gospel. It is only by this appropriation—*i.e.*, in personal decision, regeneration, or conversion—that a man is really saved, and only then does redemption become real and true for him.

Redemption thus refers to the objective work of Christ, and *salvation* refers to the subjective truth in the individual's experience of Christ. While redemption is proclaimed as a finished work, salvation is regarded as conditional upon personal experience in conversion. With this radical distinction, Baptism comes to be regarded, not as the sign and seal of

the Gospel of redemption, but as the sacramental or symbolic expression of the individual's own state as a saved, or converted person.

It is difficult for us in the Church of Scotland to blame the Baptists for adopting this unbiblical distinction between redemption and salvation, for it derives from the false distinction between the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace in our own Federal Theology. When the doctrine of election was given up, the truth of salvation was found not in the objective reality of the act of God in Christ, but in the subjective experience of conversion. At the same time the Biblical idea of a covenant was replaced by the idea of a mutual contract, voluntarily entered into by two parties. This led to the preaching of salvation as conditioned by man's act, and ultimately dependent upon him. This error of the Baptists drives us back upon the Biblical teaching that Baptism is a sacrament of the Gospel, a sign and seal of God's saving act in Jesus Christ, which is already completed *in Christ* (not only from the side of God towards man, but also from the side of man towards God), and which is freely offered to men in the Gospel.

6. The Nature of Regeneration

In line with the last distinction, Baptists tend either to speak of two regenerations—regeneration (*palingenesia*) which took place in Christ, and the regeneration which takes place in the experience of the believer—or else, and this is the more common case, to limit regeneration to the subjective experience of the believer, in whose nature and personality it is interpreted basically as a moral and psychological event. In other words regeneration is held to be a subjective state of inward moral renewal.

This view derives from the mediæval Roman subjectivism out of which the Anabaptist movement originally sprang, but whereas in Roman piety this regeneration was thought of as operating through sacramental grace, giving something in addition to what Christ had already done once and for all on our behalf, in Baptist and Arminian teaching it is thought of as taking place through conversion. It is at this point that the sharpest difference between the Biblical teaching of the Reformed Church and the teaching of the Baptists is most apparent. For the Reformed Church, regeneration is the renewal of our humanity in Christ, in which we are given to share, so that *in Christ* we are new creatures. For Baptists, regeneration is that new and additional experience which each individual must have *in himself* before he is saved. The result is that in the Baptist Church the focus of attention is not so much upon the mighty acts of our salvation in Christ as upon the individual's *experience* of conversion—*i.e.*, upon an all-important experience of dying and rising again in the likeness of Christ. This is the experimental " truth " that is made so prominent by the rigid emphasis upon believer's Baptism.

7. The Meaning of a Sacrament

Again in line with their origins in mediæval Roman piety, Baptists lay great stress upon a distinction between the inward and the outward experience ; but whereas in Romanism the focus of attention by the masses was upon the outward sacramental institution, and thus upon a false objectivity, for mediæval mystics, Anabaptists, and modern Baptists, the emphasis is upon the inwardness or spirituality of religious experience. It is essentially in reaction to the false objectivity that the Baptist view of the sacrament arises, for it is regarded as the outward expression, or symbol, of an inward moral and spiritual state. In the nature of the case, Baptism as the outward seal of inward conversion is not regarded as valid unless there actually is that subjective experience of conversion. This inward experience is regarded as the ' truth ' or ' reality ' of Baptism. This was the very view which Luther and Calvin opposed in their doctrine

of justification by grace alone in Christ, but which came, through the renaissance stress upon the autonomy of the human reason in the individual, and through Anabaptist ' spirituality ' so to infect Protestantism that in the nineteenth century it became the great boast of neo-Protestantism that truth is found in the religious personality, in religious *inwardness*, and *immediacy*. The Baptist Church thus enshrines, more than any other Church, the great error of modernism, which finds the truth of salvation in the religious subject himself, and which identifies the Holy Spirit with man's own spiritual experiences. This modernist and subjectivist theory is constantly being inhibited by the fact that Baptists are in intention Biblical Christians ; but in the great Baptists, like Wheeler Robinson, we see most clearly how this absorption of the Christological reality in the subjective experience results in the identification of the inward moral and spiritual states of the believer with what is called the pneumatological. It is this denial of the objective reality of the Holy Spirit as meaning for us anything more than our subjective knowledge of God that makes it so difficult for them to appreciate the gift of the Holy Spirit promised and sealed to infants at their Baptism (cf. D. S. Cairns, *sup.*, p. 7). It is not surprising that believer's Baptism, which entails this subjectivizing of the Holy Spirit, is essentially a modern phenomenon (first found in 1140 A.D. See 1957 Report, p. 7), for it is bound up with the " modern " outlook of renaissance and " spiritualistic " man. It is just because it has such deep roots in this modern subjectivism that it is so hard to show those who maintain it what the Biblical conception of the *Gospel of salvation, of new birth in Christ, and of justification by faith* really is.

8. The Place of Decision

Although the New Testament nowhere speaks of decision, it does call us to repent and follow Christ, and summons us to the obedience of faith. Baptists and Arminians have seized upon this element of ' decision,' and have so stressed it that everything, in fact ultimately the full reality of salvation, depends upon it. This is again essentially a modernist emphasis, and it is directly out of it that there has arisen the idea that we are saved through existential decision, and self-understanding —an idea which is menacing the very foundations of the Gospel in our generation.

In the teaching of the New Testament, the great decision has already been taken by God in Jesus Christ, for in Christ God has already laid hold upon us, while the account and response which sinful man is called to give to the Holy God has already been rendered in the obedient life and death of Jesus Christ, so that He wholly stands in for us through His vicarious life and death. The Gospel announces to us this amazing Good News, and calls upon us to throw in our lot with Christ in thankfulness, joy, and obedience. This call for decision is a call to rely upon the prior decision which Christ has already taken, and which is announced to us as a finished work in the Word of the Gospel. There is nothing that we can do, by decision, or faith, or repentance, or obedience which can add one iota to the finished work of Christ. Therefore we are not called to faith and decision in such a way that everything ultimately depends upon our faith and our decision, for this would mean that faith and decision become, in the last analysis, saving acts, or ' works ' of salvation. Nowhere in the New Testament is faith, or decision, spoken of as that which constitutes a man a forgiven being, or a Christian. If it were, we could only ' believe in ' Christ with the ulterior motive of using belief to save ourselves. This is the opposite of the Gospel. It is precisely because the Gospel announces to us the Good News that Christ has already intervened on our behalf, and has already given to God an account in our stead, with which God is well pleased, that we can really believe and are free to make a true

and sincere decision without the ulterior motive of using it as a 'saving work.' No doubt this is difficult for the natural man to understand, as St Paul found, and as, centuries later, Luther found, when they were accused of antinomianism because they preached the Gospel of justification by grace alone. The case is not one whit different when we use the modern language of decision. Here the memorable words of the late H. R. Mackintosh are in place: "Unless your preaching has a suspicion of antinomianism about it, you can be sure it is not the Gospel."

All this means that Baptism is not the sacrament of man's decision, but the sacrament of the saving decision which Christ has already made on our behalf, and which is announced to us in the word of the Gospel. It is for this reason that Baptism is administered as a seal to the word of promise in the Gospel, as a seal to the Good News announced in the *kerugma*, and never as a seal to the response or to the decision of man. This is the Biblical doctrine of Baptism, which Baptists greatly misrepresent when they insist that Baptism is the outward sign of the decision of the believer, or the outward symbol of the inward and spiritual state of his soul. While we cannot but welcome the evangelical zeal of our Baptist brethren, their call for sincere Christian decision and commitment, and their summons to men and women to repentance and conversion, we cannot agree that Baptism is the sacrament given to be the sign of man's act, or man's decision, or man's spiritual experience. We cannot do this because we really believe in the Good News announced to us in the New Testament, and sealed to us in Baptism, that the whole of our salvation depends upon Jesus Christ, and that it is in Him alone that we are new creatures. Therefore we do not look within ourselves—into our own subjective experience—to find the truth of our salvation. We do not even look to our own faith and decision, but in faith look away from ourselves to Jesus Christ, who is both the Author and Perfecter of our faith.

In name of the Commission,

THOMAS F. TORRANCE, *Convener.*
JOHN HERON, *Secretary.*

Extract Deliverance of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on the foregoing Report.

At Edinburgh, the twenty-fifth day of May, One thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine,—

Which day the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland being met and duly constituted,—*inter alia,*

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Special Commission on Baptism, which was given in by the Rev. John Heron.

It was moved and seconded—

1. The General Assembly receive the Interim Report, which completes the preliminary work of the Commission, and thank its members, and especially the Convener and the Secretary for their diligence.

2. The General Assembly instruct that a copy of the Interim Report be sent to all ministers and Presbytery elders, and copies as may be desired to the four Theological Colleges. The General Assembly also direct that sufficient copies of the Interim Report be made available for sale through the Church of Scotland Bookshops.

3. The General Assembly instruct Presbyteries to appoint a day for special conference upon the Interim Report, and to send their comments and suggestions to the Secretary of the Commission by 30th November 1959.

4. The General Assembly commend the Commission to the guidance of Almighty God in their further labours.

Extracted from the Records of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland by

J. B. LONGMUIR,
Cl. Eccl. Scot.

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The Church of Scotland

REPORT

OF THE

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON BAPTISM

MAY 1960

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REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. Reports from Presbyteries

The Commission wishes to thank the General Assembly for sending its Interim Reports down to Presbyteries year by year for their discussion and comment. This has been an invaluable help to the Commission, whose remit included " the stimulation and guidance of such study throughout the Church as may lead to the attainment of a common mind." The reports from the Presbyteries have shown a steady growth towards a common mind in the Church. Of the fifty-six Presbyteries whose comments on last year's Interim Report have been received by the Commission, only three have been much out of line with the rest. This has been most encouraging to the Commission which has done its best to profit from the volume of discussion in the Church, and to take account of the many valuable suggestions made to it.

In preparing this Report the Commission has acceded to requests from Presbyteries in three chief respects :—

(*a*) It has presented a preliminary draft of the Doctrinal Statement for discussion by the Presbyteries before it is sent down, if the Assembly so determine, under the Barrier Act.

(*b*) It has taken into account, as far as it could, many points which Presbyteries have asked to be included in the Statement, though this has meant that the latter has had to be longer than the Commission had intended.

(*c*) It has also prepared for consideration by the Assembly and Presbyteries " A Form of Instruction about Baptism " such as might, if approved by the Church, be put into the hands of Ministers, Elders, and teachers to guide them in their teaching and work.

2. Baptism cannot be isolated

Perhaps the chief difficulty in the way of giving a brief statement on Baptism is that it cannot be isolated from the whole proclamation of the Gospel, or from other specific doctrines such as those of the Lord's Supper and the Church. Many Presbyteries have again and again asked the Commission to prepare a statement on the doctrine of the Church. To do so would be to go beyond its remit, but the Commission has tried to help these Presbyteries by including as much as possible on the doctrine of the Church in the relevant sections of its statement of the doctrine of Baptism. At the same time the Commission wishes to state its conviction that the Church as a whole needs to have a deeper understanding of the doctrines of Christ and His Church, of the Atonement, and of the Lord's Supper, if a common mind on Baptism is to be firmly grounded.

3. Primary Emphases

The history of the doctrine of Baptism has shown to the Commission that certain changes in emphasis have, in the past, contributed to serious misunderstandings of Baptism, and have brought difficulty and confusion into its administration in the life of the Church. The changes that took

place in the history of the Church of Scotland since the Reformation and the problems they created were carefully noted in the Interim Reports of 1958 and 1959. In the present Report the Commission wishes to direct the attention of the Church to the primary emphases found in the New Testament and in the teaching of the Reformers.

(*a*) Baptism is essentially an evangelical sacrament. It is part of the preaching of the Gospel. The primary thing about Baptism is its direct relation to Christ, for in Baptism Christ is personally and immediately present and active, through His Word and Spirit, bringing us into union with Himself.

(*b*) Major stress has to be laid upon God's prevenient act of Grace and Election *in Christ* and His finished work—not upon some election behind the back of Christ and mediated through an institutional covenant, but upon Christ as Himself the Elect One, in whom alone we are loved and adopted by God as His Children through union with Christ.

(*c*) Because emphasis is laid upon the finished work of Christ, Baptism tells us that we cannot do anything to save ourselves ; but because the work of Christ is identical with His Person, Baptism tells us that Christ comes to each of us personally to take us into His hands and to ask of us trust and love. Therefore faith and a personal relationship to Christ are indispensable as belonging to the heart of the Baptismal relationship.

4. The Subordinate Standards

In the course of its work the Commission examined the teaching of the Church's Subordinate Standards (Westminster Confession, Catechisms, Directory, &c.) in the light of the Church's Primary Standard (The Holy Scriptures), and came to the following conclusions :—

(*a*) The basic teaching of the Subordinate Standards is in accord with that of Holy Scripture, but the Subordinate Standards make use of certain unbiblical forms of thought and expression and these are misleading.

(*b*) The teaching of the Scots Confession of 1560 and of the Reformation Catechisms is closer to the New Testament than that of the Westminster Standards.

Some difficult features about the Subordinate Standards may be noted:—

(i) They put forward a fixed notion of a " Sacrament " which is carefully defined, and then bring their conception of Baptism and the Lord's Supper into accord with it. The New Testament, however, nowhere speaks of " Sacraments," but only of Baptism and the Lord's Supper which it relates directly to Christ.

(ii) They speak of Baptism as a " means of grace," and so bring " grace " into the pragmatic realm of means and ends, where a result is to be achieved or an end attained. This implies a notion of " grace " as something that can be administered, and of Baptism as an institutional means of its administration. The New Testament, however, never relates Baptism to grace, and never thinks of grace or Baptism in terms of " means."

(iii) They speak of a sacrament as an outward and sensible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, and so import into it a dualism which is absent from the teaching of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Apart from the wrong notion of " grace " involved, this false dualism contributed to the separation of Baptism from immediate relation to Christ, and its

interpretation as a sacrament of entry into the visible society of the Church only.

(iv) Since the later Standards tend to think of Baptism as a means of grace under the administration of a visible institution, practical and legal rules for its administration become the chief concern rather than its evangelical doctrine and spiritual content.

(v) In the Westminster Standards the notion of Covenant has been changed to mean a contract into which two parties voluntarily enter on terms of mutuality. This was a serious departure from the Biblical notion of the Covenant of Grace, and led to a legalistic conception of the Sacrament, as well as to a false emphasis upon man's own act in salvation.

(vi) In the Reformation Standards connexion with Christ was central, and the sacraments were related immediately to union with Him, whereas in the Westminster Standards union with Christ was made to follow a forensic relation of justification, and was thought of in terms of infused sanctification. This contributed further to making Baptism into a legal transaction, leading to a moralistic notion of the Christian life. Failure to give union with Christ its central place impaired the doctrine of the Church. In the Shorter Catechism, for example, there is no question on the Church, and no separate place is given to the Holy Spirit.

(vii) In the Federal Theology, to which all the later Standards adhered, the Covenant was divided up. This led to a cleavage between Christ and the Church. In this way Baptism tended to lose its evangelical content and to be reduced to being the badge of the visible community.

(viii) The Westminster Standards were interpreted in such a way as to teach a doctrine of limited atonement, so that the privileges of the Gospel were regarded as restricted to members of the Covenant. This seriously inhibited the ministry of the Gospel to the heathen, or to those born outside the Covenant relationship. It also had its effect on Baptism which came to be regarded, not as part of the proclamation of the Gospel, but as the seal of the rights of the privileged only.

(ix) In the Scots Confession, Christ was held to be the Head of the Elect, and so election was thought of only as through Him, and through union with Him. In the later Standards an abstract doctrine of predestination was developed, and this took precedence over relation to Christ. The effect of this was to take the heart out of the sacraments, making them ultimately meaningless to many people.

(x) In none of the Subordinate Standards is adequate place given to the history of salvation, or to the whole historical life and ministry of Christ. This made it difficult to give Baptism its proper relation to the historical Jesus, or to see it in the light of His own Baptism in the Jordan and on the Cross, as is done in the New Testament itself.

5. The Language of the Church

The Church has two languages. Its *primary language* comes from the Bible. This is the permanent or stable language of the Church, and persists through all the changes and chances of history. Its *secondary language* comes from its tradition and is found in the Subordinate Standards of the Church, and also in the changing habits of thought and expression which are shaped by popular piety and habits of speech. This language constantly needs to be corrected and reformed by the Word of God.

The Commission is convinced that any account of Baptism that is to be of lasting value must be mainly in the primary and permanent language of the Church, but that in teaching and instruction use must also be made of the secondary language in order to speak directly to the questions that are in people's minds.

Therefore, in view of the requests of the Presbyteries, the Commission has resolved to set before the Church two different documents :-

(*a*) *A Doctrinal Statement*

In this document we seek to give a straightforward account of the doctrine of Baptism *in the Biblical way and in Biblical language*. In it we do not use the terms "sacrament," "means of grace," &c., except in the Appendix.

This we regard as the *primary statement*, which can stand by itself, and is intended to direct attention back to the Bible.

(*b*) *A Form of Instruction about Baptism*

In this document we set out in the form of questions and answers an account of Baptism in the secondary and changing language of the Church. This is intended to deal with questions and problems which arise out of traditional habits of thinking, and which are in people's minds to-day.

This document is meant to serve as a manual of instruction, to be placed in the hands of Ministers, Elders, teachers, and others for their use and guidance.

6. The Judgment of the Presbyteries

In sending these two different documents to the Presbyteries in draft form, the Commission is acceding to their specific request. The Commission will be greatly helped in its final work if Presbyteries can give their considered comments on the following questions :—

(*a*) *Content*

Is the *Doctrinal Statement* a faithful account of the Biblical teaching ?

This is the fundamental document, and its statements should be carefully sifted. All criticisms and suggestions will be welcomed and given the fullest consideration by the Commission.

(*b*) *Form*

Do the Presbyteries agree with this twofold form of presentation—namely, a *Doctrinal Statement* in the Biblical and primary language of the Church and a supplementary *Form of Instruction about Baptism* dealing with the chief questions and difficulties ?

(*c*) *Method*

Do the Presbyteries consider that this is a good way in which to guide the instruction of people, or is there a better way ?

Are there any other important questions that need to be considered in such a document ?

7. Practical Questions

Practical questions of law, administration, or liturgy do not strictly fall within the remit of the Commission, but they cannot be avoided altogether. Accordingly the Commission proposes to submit to the General Assembly next year the following :—

(*a*) Suggestions which, if the Assembly so desire, may be passed to the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion regarding a revised preamble for the Orders for the Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism, and regarding the revision of the orders themselves,

(*b*) Suggestions which, if the Assembly so desire, may be passed to the Committee on Religious Instruction of Youth, regarding the preparation of material for instructing the young about Baptism.

(*c*) Proposals for the revision of the Act of Assembly, 1951, anent the Admission of Infants to Baptism arising out of the decisions of the Church regarding the doctrine of Baptism.

PART I.—THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM

1. Baptism and the Gospel

Throughout the New Testament, Baptism is inseparably united to the preaching of the Gospel—the proclamation of the mighty acts of God for the salvation of men. The central fact about Baptism is its connexion with Christ and His whole saving work—His Birth, Baptism, Ministry, Sufferings, Death, Resurrection and Ascension, and the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

(*a*) *The Baptism of John*

All the Evangelists, when speaking of the beginning of the Gospel, direct us to John the Baptist who was sent to prepare the way of the Lord.

(i) John stood on the boundary between the Old Testament and the New Testament, proclaiming that the Messianic Kingdom was at hand, and that the Covenant promises made to Abraham were about to be fulfilled.

(ii) In his ministry the preaching of the Kingdom and Baptism were united. He sealed his preaching by a Baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins. John's preaching and Baptism looked for their fulfilment to the Messiah who would come to judge and redeem His people.

(iii) John was sent to baptize with water, but the Coming One would baptize with the Holy Spirit, and thus fulfil the Messianic promise of the last days, when God would pour out His Spirit and inaugurate the new age. The meaning of John's Baptism did not lie in itself but in the One to whom he pointed—the Lamb of God who was to bear the sins of the world.

(*b*) *The Baptism of Jesus*

(i) Jesus submitted Himself to John's Baptism. Taking His place among those who came to be baptized by John, He humbled Himself and identified Himself with sinners in obedience to His Father's will that He should thus make righteousness available for "the many."

(ii) At the Baptism of Jesus the heavens were opened, the Spirit descended upon Him, and He heard the voice of the Father saying, "Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." In this He was acknowledged as the anointed Son and the suffering Servant predicted in the Old Testament.

(iii) Jesus interpreted His whole life and ministry thereafter as the Baptism with which He was being baptized, and identified its fulfilment with His passion and death upon the Cross. As this end drew near He spoke of Himself as the Son of Man who came not to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many, and in the Last Supper solemnly inaugurated the New Covenant in His Blood for the remission of sins. Thus "my Baptism" and "my Cup" both speak of His sacrificial life and death into which He was consecrated at the Jordan. In His death the complete solidarity of the one Righteous One with sinners, to which His Baptism by John pointed, was fulfilled.

(iv) At Jordan Jesus was consecrated by the anointing of the Spirit to be the King of the Messianic Kingdom. This was fulfilled with power in His resurrection, when the Father exalted Him as His Beloved Son and gave Him all power in heaven and earth. With this power He commissioned the Church and sent it forth to make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them. (Matt. xxviii. 19 f.)

(*c*) *The Baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost*

(i) When Jesus lived on earth the life of an obedient Son, and died in sacrifice upon the Cross, it was not for His own sake but for ours. He did it for us men and for our salvation. In our humanity He received the Baptism meant for sinners. In our humanity He received the divine judgment upon sin. In our humanity He made atonement, and in our humanity rose again from the dead. When He died and rose again for us, we died and rose again in Him.

The New Testament relates this specifically to the Church as His Body. When Christ rose again that third day, the new Temple was raised up, the Church was built : and ever since then living stones have been built into it.

(ii) Jesus was baptized in the Jordan not for His own sake but for ours. In Him our humanity was anointed by the Spirit and consecrated in sonship to God. Thus the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Church at Pentecost is the counterpart of the anointing of Christ by the Spirit at the Jordan. The same Spirit who descended upon Christ at the Baptism to abide with Him has, ever since Pentecost, been poured out upon the Church, and dwells in it as the Body of Christ. In this Baptism which is common to Christ and His Church we are given to share, so that in Christ we are consecrated for sonship to God and for mission to the world.

(iii) As Jesus was consecrated in His Baptism as Servant, and then had to endure His passion in a mission of obedience, so we also are consecrated in Baptism to a new life in Christ, and then have to fulfil it in a life of obedience, faith, service, and suffering witness for Christ's sake.

2. The Baptism of the Individual

The Baptism of the individual, in water and the Spirit, presupposes and rests upon the One Baptism of Christ and His Church.

(*a*) The Baptism of Jesus meant that He was consecrated as the Messiah ; and that He, the Righteous One, became one with us, taking upon Himself our unrighteousness. Our Baptism means that we become one with Him, sharing in His righteousness, and that we are consecrated as members of the Messianic People.

(*b*) Because we are united to Christ, and are members of His Body, what happened to Him as the Head of the Body has happened to us also who are members of the Body. In Baptism it is Christ Himself who acts, and who unites us with Himself, so that we participate in His birth and life and death and resurrection. In Him we are born again ; in Him we are clothed with a new obedience ; in Him we are dead to sin ; in Him we rise to newness of life and look for the resurrection of the body.

(*c*) Baptism, then, is not what the individual does, but what God has already done in Christ, and through His Spirit continues to do in and to the individual. " Not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of His own mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit poured upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour ; that being justified by His grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Tit. iii. 5-7.)

We *are baptized*. It is done *to* us in the Name of God, and we receive

it passively, for we cannot add to Christ's finished work. We must receive it "as little children," whatever our age may be, and as little children enter into His Kingdom of Grace. What is done to us is that we are ingrafted into Christ. We are therefore no longer our own, but must live a life of faith and love in Him.

(*d*) As the Baptism of Jesus included in itself all that was to follow, and was accomplished only in His death and resurrection, so our Baptism anticipates our entire life, death, and resurrection.

Through Baptism we are discipled into Christ, and are therefore summoned to a life of discipleship, in obedience to Him who has gone ahead of us, but who calls us to confess His Name while we wait for His return.

Baptism stands therefore at the very beginning of our life in Christ, as the source of all that follows upon earth, and as the pledge of what will be fulfilled and revealed in the Day of the Resurrection, when Christ will come again, and we shall see Him face to face, and be like Him.

3. Baptism as the Source of New Relationships

Baptism brings us into new relationships.

(*a*) *Baptism relates us to God as children to a Father*

(i) The mission of Jesus took place within the Covenant God made with Abraham, for He is the Seed of Abraham, the Heir of the Old Covenant who brings it to its fulfilment in the New. The Church of Jesus Christ, baptized into His Name, is the people of the New Covenant—the New Israel, and to it belong in Christ all the promises of the Old Covenant and of the New Covenant. "The promise is to you and to your children." (Acts ii. 39.)

(ii) In the New Covenant established in Jesus Christ, God wills to be the Father of all men, providing a means of its fulfilment in the sacrificial life and death of the Mediator. Thus God adopts us and our children to be His own, and through His Spirit makes us brothers and co-heirs of Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son, that we, like Him, may cry "Abba, Father."

(iii) The sign of the Covenant in the old form was Circumcision, which was a seal of promise. With the New Covenant a new sign was given, which was the seal of the fulfilment of the promise. This sign was Baptism in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The outward form which the New Covenant takes is the community of the baptized : the inward form is the communion of the Spirit.

Into this inheritance we are initiated in Baptism. In continual renewal of our participation in it we celebrate the Lord's Supper.

(*b*) *Baptism relates us to Christ as members of His Body*

(i) Through the Spirit given in Baptism we participate in Jesus Christ. We share in His birth from above, His obedient life, His saving death and triumphant resurrection. We are dead and our life is hid with Christ in God.

(ii) Participation is twofold : Christ identifies Himself with us, and through the Spirit we are so united to Him that we become members of His Body. Our union with Him depends upon and grows out of His union with us.

(iii) Our participation in Christ is not confined to the moment when the rite is administered. In Baptism we are grafted into Christ that we may begin to grow in spiritual union with Him, through feeding on Him by the power of His Word and Spirit.

(iv) This participation is not a solitary event in separation from the fellowship of the Church. Through Baptism we are placed within the fellowship which the Church has with Him. Christ dwells in the baptized fellowship gathered into His Name. In and through this fellowship the life of the baptized is nourished and fashioned by the life of Christ.

4. Baptism and Faith

Baptism and faith belong inseparably together.

(*a*) Baptism unites us with Christ in His faithfulness and obedience to the Father. In Christ, God has bound Himself to us and us to Himself before ever we can bind ourselves to Him. As an act done to us, Baptism tells us that it is not upon our faith, or our own faithfulness, that we rely, but upon Christ alone, and upon His faithfulness. Therefore Baptism lays down the solid and unshakeable foundation on which we are summoned to build our faith, and are given genuine freedom to believe and make our own personal decision for Christ.

(*b*) God's election or decision for man and man's response or decision for God are related to one another only through the mediation of Jesus Christ. Through Baptism into Him we are initiated into the new life of sonship in which we are committed to God, and in which we commit ourselves fully to God, relying utterly on His faithfulness. Therefore Baptism covenants us to a life of faith and obedience to the Father in Jesus Christ, and requires faith and obedience of us as long as we live. The necessity of faith for the baptized is in no way set aside or diminished by Baptism, but on the contrary is made even more urgent. Baptism does not bear fruit apart from faith, since to be without faith would be to repudiate God by refusing to rely on His faithfulness in Christ.

(*c*) The New Testament teaches us that faith is the gift of the Spirit, but it also teaches us that it is through faith that we may continue to receive the Spirit. Baptism is our initiation into a mutual relation of the Spirit and faith. In Baptism we are given the Spirit and are opened to new life and faith, but only through this faith may we enter into possession of the new life.

(*d*) The baptized are made free to love and trust God, and to find in that love and trust the way to grow continually in the knowledge and grace of Jesus Christ. This does not mean that the baptized lead a sinless life. That would be to confuse Baptism and its future fulfilment. Rather do they lead a life of penitence and ever-renewed forgiveness, of watching and praying and waiting upon God.

5. Baptism—in Time and for Eternity

In Baptism we are united to Christ, and become heirs of all the promises of God. Thus Baptism embraces the whole of life.

(*a*) In Baptism we are severed from the old stock of unregenerate human nature and grafted into Christ in order to share in His new human nature; we are translated out of the bondage and dominion of guilt and placed under the lordship of the crucified and risen Christ; we are cut off from the inheritance of the old Adam and become instead joint-heirs with Christ, the King and Head of the new creation. From being children of darkness and citizens of the world we are made children of light and citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven in which sin is forgiven and grace abounds.

(*b*) In Baptism we are buried with Christ in His death, and our life in sin has found its judgment and its end. Therefore Baptism is administered once and only once, as an irrevocable seal of that finished work of Christ which sets our life on a wholly new foundation.

(*c*) From this new beginning Baptism looks forward to the End. We are sealed as the property of Christ, as members of the Covenant people, unto the day of redemption. For us, then, the final judgment has already been anticipated in justification, since we have received, in the gift of the Spirit, the earnest and pledge of resurrection into the New Creation.

(*d*) Baptism rests upon the finished work of Christ, and therefore our Baptism cannot be annulled by sin, but remains as the pledge of God's forgiveness for all who seek it by faith. By looking back to their Baptism as the seal and pledge of their salvation the children of the Church grow up to call God Father, to confess Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and to pray in the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore when they come to years of understanding and responsibility and desire to draw near to the Lord's Table, they are to be admitted on the profession of their faith and with the prayer that the God of all grace, who gave them His Spirit in their Baptism, may establish them in His Covenant and confirm them by the same Spirit that nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ at His Table they may serve Him faithfully and joyfully in His Church and be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

6. The Administration of Baptism

Baptism is to be administered in a form which accords with its Biblical institution and meaning.

(*a*) Baptism is to be administered with water in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to accompany and seal the preaching of the Gospel.

(*b*) Baptism is to be administered only within the life and discipline of the Church. The Baptism of the individual presupposes the one Baptism common to Christ and His Church, and therefore takes place only within the fellowship of the baptized membership of the Church, where Christ acts and rules through the proclamation of His Word, and gives communion with Himself in His Body and Blood.

(*c*) Because Baptism is conjoined to the preaching of the Word in the authoritative commission of Christ to His Apostles, only those who are lawfully ordained to preach the Word are authorized to administer Baptism.

(*d*) Because in Baptism God has bound Himself to us and us to Himself before we could bind ourselves to Him, and because we receive it passively "as little children," it is appropriate to people of all ages. The subjects of Baptism are therefore children born of parents within the Church, to whom the promise belongs, or else those who have responded to the offer of salvation in Christ and (with their children) seek baptismal incorporation into the people of God upon profession of faith.

(*e*) Because Baptism is bound up not only with preaching but with teaching, it is to be administered only where there is provision, promise, and assurance that the baptized will be brought up in the family of God and instructed in the faith.

APPENDIX TO PART I.

The Biblical Doctrine and Traditional Terminology

(*a*) The word "Sacrament," as it is now used, is not found in the New Testament. Very early in the history of the Church it was used to translate MUSTERION as referring to the union of God and man in Christ, and as referring to the union between Christ and His Church. Strictly speaking there is only one "Mystery" or "Sacrament"—namely, "God manifest in the flesh." (I Tim. iii. 16; Eph. i. 9. iii. 3-9, 32; Col. i. 27.)

Because Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the appointed ordinances through which we are made to share in that " mystery of Christ and His Church," they too came to be called " Mysteries " or " Sacraments." A " Sacrament " in this sense is the sign or veil through which, while still on earth, we partake of the mystery of Christ.

(*b*) In the New Testament " grace " is never related to Baptism or to the Lord's Supper, and is only once associated with the Spirit (Heb. x. 29). Early in the history of the Church " grace " came to be regarded as a divine potency or quality that could be transferred and infused into men through the agency of the Spirit. When this " grace " was thought of as channelled through the Church, the sacraments were regarded as the institutional means for its administration and distribution to the people.

The Reformers rejected this notion of institutional " grace," but they continued to apply the expression " means of grace " to Baptism because in this ordinance Christ has appointed an external action on the part of the Church to be the instrumental means through which He fulfils a specific spiritual purpose. Nevertheless history reveals that the habit of thinking of Baptism as a " means of grace " drags it down into the pragmatic realm of means and ends, and so tends to bring back the old error, and to cause administrative questions, rather than the Gospel. to be uppermost in men's minds.

It is to be admitted that when considered as a " means," Baptism has no spiritual efficacy in itself. It must not be regarded as infusing " grace." Baptism is a sacrament of the Gospel. It is immediately related to Christ, who is personally present and active in it through His Word and Spirit. He who appointed and ordered it is Christ, who has all power on earth, as in heaven. Therefore we believe that what is done by us on earth, in fulfilment of His command and in reliance on His promise, i done also by Him on earth as in Heaven.

(*c*) Baptism and the Lord's Supper were spoken of by Augustine and the Reformers as God's " Visible Words," for He has put His Word not only into the Scriptures but also into the action of the sacraments, that through them He may communicate Himself visibly to us. As in the Incarnation God took hold of our human nature in order to redeem and remake it, so in Baptism He takes hold of each of us in order to draw us within His redeeming and recreating power. As in the Incarnation God adapted Himself to our creaturely existence in order to lift us up to share in His divine life and love, so in Baptism God condescends in His grace to make Himself accessible to us in our frailty and weakness. In Baptism He comes to us under the sign of water, appointed by Him to represent His cleansing and quickening power, and sanctified by Him as the instrument of His saving operation in which He adopts us into His family and Kingdom.

PART II.—A FORM OF INSTRUCTION ABOUT BAPTISM

What is Baptism ?

1. Baptism is an ordinance instituted by Christ in His Church, and is part of its proclamation of the Gospel.

2. The warrant to baptize is St Matthew xxviii. 18 ff.

3. Baptism derives from our Lord's own Baptism by John in the Jordan, in which He identified Himself with sinners.

4. Baptism is an action-sign in which we share in His Baptism and so have part in Him and in all His saving work for us.

5. Baptism and the preaching of the Gospel are bound together and offer the same salvation.

6. Baptism follows upon the Word as its appointed ratification, and is the instrument of its application to a named individual.

7. Baptism is distinctive in that in it God seals this salvation and new life to the individual in an unrepeatable and irrevocable way.

Who Acts in Baptism?

1. God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—acts in Baptism, taking the initiative, seeking to draw us into a personal relationship with Himself.

As the Father who has poured out His love upon us by giving us His Son, He adopts us into sonship and makes us members of His family.

As the Son who has united Himself to us and has given His obedient life and death in sacrifice for our sins, He reconciles us to the Father.

As the Spirit who has been poured out upon the Church, He unites us to Christ as members of His Body, so that we may share in His sanctified and risen life.

2. In Baptism God uses the service of men. When the Church baptizes, it acts only as His earthly instrument, knowing that God will acknowledge and bless its action as His own.

3. Since it is God Himself who acts in Baptism, confirming His Word and sealing His work of salvation, the effective act in Baptism is not to be explained by what men do in it but only by what God does.

4. Baptism does not add anything new to the finished work of Christ, but makes us share in the fruit of that finished work.

5. It is not the performance of the ritual, or the worthiness of those taking part, but the action of God Himself which gives Baptism its power.

6. Because God stands by His own act and will not fail it, Baptism cannot be understood only as a symbolical illustration of the saving love of God in Christ. In it God really does what He signifies.

7. God's action in Baptism is not limited to the time of its administration, but avails for the whole life of the baptized.

What Happens in Baptism?

1. Through Baptism we are grafted into Christ, who once and for all united Himself to us when He became man.

2. Through this union we share in His life and all He has done for us.

3. Through His birth we have a new birth and are made members of the new humanity.

4. Through His obedient life and death our sins are forgiven and we are clothed with a new righteousness.

5. Through His resurrection and triumph over the powers of darkness we are freed from the dominion of evil.

6. Through His ascension the Kingdom of Heaven is opened for us, and we wait for His coming again to fulfil in us the new creation.

7. Through sharing in His Spirit we are made members of His Body and are admitted into the visible fellowship of His Church.

What is the Relation of Baptism to the Church?

1. Baptism is Christ's gift to the Church. The same Spirit who descended upon Christ at His Baptism was poured out upon the Church at Pentecost and continually dwells in it as the bond of union and communion between the members and the Head.

2. Baptism has its proper place in the midst of the worshipping people of God, where the mighty acts of Christ are proclaimed, and where, through the Word, the Spirit is effectively at work. Thus Baptism includes an act

of thanksgiving on the part of the Church for God's gift of new life, an act of prayer for the preservation and sanctification of the baptized, and an act of confession of faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

3. Baptism and the Lord's Supper mark out the covenanted sphere of union and communion with God. Baptism sets up the outer frontier of the Church, distinguishing it from the world as the community of those who are named with the Name of Christ and are made to share in His triumph over all the powers of darkness. Therefore Baptism marks out that area in the world where the Kingdom of Heaven is opened to believers, and where all who enter in may, through the Lord's Supper, feed upon Christ and grow up into Him.

4. Because the preaching of the Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper are bound together in the authoritative commission of Christ to His Apostles, only those who are lawfully ordained to preach the Word are authorised to administer Baptism or the Lord's Supper. The ministry alone has the authority to baptize ; Christ alone has the power to make it effective through His Word and Spirit.

5. Because Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as seals of the Word, are nothing in themselves, apart from the Word, they are to be administered only where the Word is proclaimed, where teaching in the truth of the ordinances is given, and where, under the discipline of the Church, the sanctity of Baptism and Holy Communion, as initiation into the family of Christ and provision for its feeding and growth in Him, is carefully guarded and preserved.

To Whom should Baptism be Administered ?

1. St Peter, on the day of Pentecost, called all men to repent and be baptized saying, " the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to Him " (Acts ii. 39 R.S.V.). Thus both children and adults may receive Baptism.

2. By " children " are meant the seed of the faithful. Such children receive Baptism as the children of the Chosen People had received Circumcision, to ratify their membership of God's People. The faithful are those who are in such an effective relationship with Christ that their home is truly part of the Church, and one in which the children will be trained in Christian ways.

3. By " adults " are meant those who, being outwith God's people, are called by God to Himself through the preaching of the Gospel, who repent, and seek to be adopted into God's family.

4. In their reception of Baptism adults and children have this in common that neither of them can do what Christ has done, and that each of them can only receive passively—*i.e.*, as little children.

What is the Right Use of Baptism ?

1. Because Baptism is the seal of what God has done for us in Christ, it implies responsibility as well as privilege.

2. Baptism does not make faith unnecessary, nor is it faith's reward. It summons the baptized to lifelong faith in God who, in His faithfulness, will not go back upon His promises.

3. For those baptized as infants this means that when they come to years of understanding they are to acknowledge their Baptism, own its obligations, and claim the inheritance it conferred upon them by coming to the Lord's Table.

4. Baptism does not make us sinless but calls us to a life of discipleship, to fight the battle of the Spirit against the flesh, and daily to repent of our sins.

5. Baptism makes us members of a new community where we are to live no longer unto ourselves but unto Him who loved us, and to love one another. It calls us to bear the reproach of Christ, to engage joyfully in His service, and to manifest His works in the midst of the world.

6. In Baptism we are sealed unto the day of redemption as members of the pilgrim people of God who look for the day when Christ will come again to judge and renew the earth.

7. While Baptism does not allow the baptized to fall into despair, it does not allow the baptized any carnal security regarding his state of salvation. What is given may be refused; what is grafted may wither; what is generated may never grow.

8. When Baptism is repudiated it becomes a sign of judgment to the unrepentant. The seal which identifies him as a soldier of Christ then serves to convict him as a deserter, although it still avails for him if he turns again and in conversion becomes as a little child, finding refuge in the name of Jesus Christ sealed upon him at Baptism.

Why do we call Baptism a Sacrament or Means of Grace?

1. In the New Testament the union of God and man in Christ, and the union of Christ and His Church are described by the Greek word MUSTERION (English: mystery). When the New Testament came to be translated into Latin, this word was rendered by SACRAMENTUM (English: sacrament). Because Baptism was an appointed ordinance through which we are made to share in the union of Christ and His Church, it also came to be called a "mystery" or, more commonly in the West, a "sacrament."

2. Baptism is called a "means of grace" because it is an external action appointed by Christ in the Church which He uses to unite us to Himself, in order that He may fulfil in us the promise of His Grace. Because He who appointed it has all power on earth as in Heaven, we believe that what is done by us on earth, in reliance on His promise, is done also by Him on earth as in Heaven.

3. Baptism is also called a "Visible Word" of God, for He has put His Gospel not only in the Scriptures but also in the action of the sacraments, that through them He may visibly communicate Himself to us. In Baptism Jesus Christ comes to us under the sign of water, appointed by Him to represent His cleansing and quickening power in a way that we can easily understand, so that we may be assured that He really does what the sign represents.

In name of the Commission,

THOMAS F. TORRANCE, *Convener.*
JOHN HERON, *Secretary.*

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